A History of Muslim Philosophy

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Preface

About four years ago I received a letter from Mr. S. M. Sharif, Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan and now Secretary in the Ministry of Education, drawing my attention to the fact that there was no detailed History of Muslim Philosophy in the English language and inviting me to draw up a scheme for the preparation of such a History. The scheme prepared by me envisaged the collaboration of eighty scholars from all over the world. The blue…prints of the plan were placed by Mr. S. M. Sharif before the Government of Pakistan for approval and provision of funds. The Cabinet by a special ordinance deputed me to edit the History, and appointed a Committee :consisting of the following to steer the scheme through

(Mr. I. I. Kazi, Vice…Chancellor, University of Sind (Chairman

(The Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan (Member

Mr. Mumtaz Hasan, then Secretary Finance, Government of Pakistan, and now (Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission (Member

(Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore (Member

Dr. Serajul Haque, Head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. University (of Dacca (Member

Professor M. Abdul Hye, Vice…Principal, Government College, Rajshahi

(Member)

(Myself (Member‑Secretary

The Committee was later enlarged by the addition of Dr. M. Ahmed, ViceChancellor, Rajshahi University.

But for the initiative taken by Mr. S. M. Sharif and the constant help and encouragement received from him, a liberal grant from the State, and most willing co‑operation from the Chairman and members of the Committee, it would not have been possible for me to bring this work to completion.

From the very beginning I have been aware of the sheer impossibility of doing full justice to such a vast canvas of movements, thinkers, and thoughts. I am most grateful to the large number of contributors who have made at least the outlines of the entire picture possible.

As this is the first major work on the history of Muslim philosophy it is bound to have many deficiencies, but a beginning had to be made and it has been made with the hope that it will pave the way for future improvements.

In a collaboration work like this complete uniformity of language, style, and points of view, and evenness of quality and length, are hard to achieve. However, efforts have been made to keep disparity in these matters as well as in transliteration, capitalization and punctuation as much within bounds as possible. Credit for whatever merits these volumes have must go to those who have joined this venture;

.responsibility for whatever faults it may have is mine

I wish to express the Committee of Directors' deep gratitude to Asia Foundation for its gift of the paper used

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,in this work, and my personal thanks to its Representative in Pakistan

Mr. Curbs Farrar, for the keen interest evinced by him throughout the course of its .preparation

I have to acknowledge my great obligation to Mr. R. K. V. Goldstein of Aitchison College, Lahore, and Mr. Hugh Gethin of the University of the Panjab for their helpful guidance in the matter of language. I am equally indebted to Professor M. Saeed Sheikh of Government College, Lahore, who has not only gone over the whole typescript and read proofs but has also suggested many improvements in thought .and expression

I must also express my thanks to Mr. Mumtaz Hasan for his valuable suggestions towards the removal of some apologetic passages from the original manuscript, and to him as well as to Professor M. Abdul Hye, Mr. A. H. Kardar, and Dr. Serajul Haque for .reading several chapters and drawing my attention to some omissions

My thanks are also due to Mr. Ashraf Darr for preparing the Index and helping me in proof…reading, to Mr. Ashiq Husain for typing the whole manuscript, Mr. Abdus Salam for putting in the diacritical marks, and Mr. Javid Altaf, a brilliant young scholar, for .checking capitalization

,In the end I have to note with great regret that two of the contributors to the work

Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim of Pakistan who was also a member of the Committee of

Directors and Dr. Mecdut Mansuroglu of Turkey, have passed away. May their souls !rest in peace

Lahore: August ١, ١٩۶١

.M

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M. Sharif

Introduction

Introduction by the Editor, M.M Sharif, M.A, Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, (Lahore (Pakistan

A

Histories of philosophy have been invariably written in the light of the philosophies of history presupposed by their authors. The result of this has been that errors vitiating their philosophies of history have crept into and marred their histories of philosophy. .In the present work our effort has been to steer clear of these errors

Instead of reading history in the mirrors of presupposed philosophies which may give distorted images, it is the study of history itself through which the dynamics of history can be clearly seen and its laws discovered. We hope this study of Muslim philosophy and the empirical survey of its course will spotlight at least some of the misconceptions current among philosophers and historians about the nature of .history and the laws governing it

It will perhaps be generally agreed that human nature is fundamentally the same the world over. All human beings and the cultures they develop have the same fundamental needs, customs, impulses, and desires which, organizer as personalities, .determine their march towards their personal and social goals

The fundamental nature of men being the same, the basic laws of cultural development and decay always remain the same. But owing to different environmental conditions, cultural groups evolve differently in different parts of the world and thousands of years of indigenous experience give those groups their own social and psychological character; and their character in response to environmental stimuli creates all the

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.differences that appear in their respective life…histories

Muslim society forms a single cultural group. It has been subject to the same laws of growth and decay as any other cultural group, but it has also developed some peculiar .features of its own

B

Philosophers of social history individually differ in their views about the universal laws of history. There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth…century philosophers of history who believe that social history is like a wave, it has a rise and then it falls never to rise .again, and view a society or a culture as an organism which has only one cycle of life

Like the life of any individual organism, the life of a culture has its childhood, maturity, old age, and death, its spring, summer, winter, and autumn. Just as a living organism cannot be revived after its death, even so a culture or a society can see no revival

once it is dead. Biological, geographical, and racial causes can to a limited extent in… .fluence its life…course but cannot change its inevitable cycle

To this group belong Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee. Our study of Muslim culture and thought supports their view that in certain respects the dynamism of society is like the dynamism of a wave; but are the two other doctrines expounded by these philosophers equally true? First, is it true that a given society is a living organism? And, ?second, is it true that it has only one unrepeated life…course

Let us first take the first. Is

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a society or a culture an organism? Long ago Plato took a State to be an individual writ large. Not the same, but a similar mistake is being made now. All analogies are true only up to a point and not beyond that point. To view a society on the analogy of an .individual organism is definitely wrong

As Sorokin has brilliantly shown, no society is so completely unified into an organic whole that it should be viewed as an organism. An individual organism is born, it grows and dies, and its species is perpetuated by reproduction, but a culture cannot repeat itself in species by reproduction. Revival of individual organism is impossible, but the .revival of a culture is possible

It is achieved by the activization of its dormant vitality, by responses aroused by fresh challenges, and by the infusion of new elements. The first revival of Muslim culture…its revival after the Mongol onslaughts which began when hardly half a century had passed and reached its full fruition in two centuries and a half…was partly due to its inherent vitality which could not be sapped completely even by these unprecedented .events

They seemed to affect total devastation of Muslim lands, but in fact could produce only a depression. Soon rain…bearing clouds gathered and these lands were again green and teeming with life. Though the challenge itself was the strongest the world

.has ever seen, it was, nevertheless, not strong enough to destroy all response

This revival of the Muslim culture

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was partly due to the infusion into it earlier of the fresh blood of the Turkish slaves and mercenaries and later that of the Mongol conquerors, for they themselves came into the fold of Islam bringing with them the vigour and vitality of their nomadic .ancestors

Each individual organism is a completely integrated whole or a complete Gestalt, but though such an integration is an ideal of each culture it has never been fully achieved by any culture. Each culture is a supersystem consisting of some large systems such as religion, language, law, philosophy, science, fine arts, ethics, economics, .technology, politics, territorial sway, associations, customs, and mores

Each of these consists of smaller systems as science includes physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, etc., and each of these smaller systems is comprised of yet smaller systems as mathematics is comprised of geometry, algebra, arithmetic, and so on. Besides these systems there are partly connected or wholly isolated heaps within .these systems and super…systems

Thus, a total culture of any organized group consists not of one cultural system but of a multitude of vast and small cultural systems that are partly in harmony, partly out of .harmony, with one another, and in addition many congeries of various kinds

No past empire was as well…knit as the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus and yet .groups like the Kharijites and the Shiites fell apart from its total structure

After the fall of the Umayyads in the religious field there appeared some isolated groups like the Qarmatians

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and the Isma'ilites, and in the political sphere Muslim Spain became not only

independent of but also hostile to the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad under which .Muslim culture and thought may be said to have reached their golden prime

So much about the organismic side of the theory of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee when examined in the light of the history of Muslim culture and thought. What about its cyclical side? Is the life of a people like a meteor, beginning, rising, falling, and then disappearing for ever? Does the history of a society or a culture see only one spring, one summer, and one autumn and then, in its winter, completely ?close

The philosophers of history mentioned above, except Spengler, concede that the length of each period may be different with different peoples and cultures, but, according to them, the cycle is just one moving curve or one wave that rises and falls .only once

This position also seems to be wrong. As the researches of Kroeber and Sorokin have conclusively shown, "many great cultural or social systems or civilizations have many cycles, many social, intellectual, and political ups and downs in their virtually indefinitely long span of life, instead of just one life…cycle, one period of blossoming, ".and one of decline

In the dynamics of intellectual and aesthetic creativity, Egyptian civilization rose and .fell at least four times and Graeco…Roman…Byzantine culture, several times

Similarly, China and India had two big creative impulses and the third has now surely .begun

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The Muslim civilization rose from the first/seventh to the fifth/eleventh century. Then it gradually declined till it received a deadly blow in the form of the Mongol onslaughts. Its chief monuments of political and cultural greatness were almost completely .destroyed. And yet it did not die

It rose again and saw its second rise from the last decade of the seventh/thirteenth century to the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century during which period its domain covered three of the biggest empires of the world…Turkish, Persian, and Indian…only to fall again from the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth to the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century; and as this study will clearly indicate there are now .(signs of a third rise in almost all Muslim lands (Book Eight

This shows that there is "no universal law decreeing that every culture having once flowered must wither without any chance of flowering again." A culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, and, thus, as a whole see many rises .and falls

In both periods of its rise Muslim culture was marked by its religio…political and architectural ascendancy; but while in the first period its glory lay also in its commercial, industrial, scientific, and philosophical fields, in the second it distinguished itself chiefly in the fields of poetry, painting, secular history, travels, .mysticism, and minor arts

If by the birth of a civilization these writers mean a sudden appearance of a total unit like that of an organism, and by death

.a total disintegration, then a total culture is never born nor does it ever die

At its so…called birth each culture takes over living systems or parts of a preceding culture and integrates them with newly…born items. As the reader of this work will find, Muslim culture integrated within itself what it regarded as the intrinsically or pragmatically valuable parts of Arab Paganism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, Hindu mathematics and medicine, and Chinese mysticism and alchemy with its own .contributions to human life and thought

Again, to talk about the death or disappearance of a culture or civilization is

.meaningless

A part of a total culture, its art or its religion, may disappear, but a considerable part of it is always taken over by other groups by whom it is often developed further and expanded. The Muslims did not only annex certain areas of other cultures but they expanded their horizons much further before annexing them as integral parts of their .own culture. Here it is important to remove a misconception

If some thought of earlier speculation runs through the fabric of Muslim thought even as a golden thread, it does not mean that, like many Western Orientalists, we should take the thread for the fabric. No culture, as no individual thinker, makes an absolutely new start. New structures are raised with the material already produced. The past always rolls into the present of every culture and supplies some elements .for its emergent edifice

States are born and they die, but cultures like

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the mingled waters of different waves are never born as organisms nor die as organisms. Ancient Greece as a State died, but after its death a great deal of Greek culture spread far and wide and is still living as an important element in the cultures of .Europe

Jewish States ceased to exist, but much of Jewish culture was taken over by Chris… tianity and Islam. No culture dies in toto, though all die in parts. In respect of those .parts of culture which live, each culture is immortal

Each culture or civilization emerges gradually from pre…existing cultures. As a whole it may have several peaks, may see many ups and downs and thus flourish for millen… nia, decline into a latent existence, re…emerge and again become dominant for a certain period and then decline once more to appear again. Even when dominated by other cultures a considerable part of it may live as an element fully or partly

.integrated in those cultures

Again, the cycle of birth, maturity, decline, and death can be determined only by the prior determination of the life‐span of a civilization, but there is no agreement among these writers on this point. What according to Danilevsky is one civilization, say, the ancient Semitic civilization, is treated by Toynbee as three civilizations, the .Babylonian, Hittite and Sumeric, and by Spengler as two, the Magian and Babylonian

In the life‐history of a people ones notices one birth‐and‐death sequence, the other two, and the third three. The births and deaths of cultures

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observed by one writer are not noticed at all by the others. When the beginning and end of a culture cannot be determined, it is extravagant to talk about its birth and .death and its unrepeatable cycle

A civilization can see many ups and downs and there is nothing against the possibility of its regeneration. No culture dies completely. Some elements of each die out and .others merge as living factors into other cultures

There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth‐century philosophers of history who confine themselves to the study of art phenomena and draw conclusions about the dynamics of culture in general. Peter Paul Ligeti, Frank Chambers, and Charles Lalo belong to .this group

We may not quarrel with them about some of their conclusions; but should like to make an observation about one of their hypotheses‐a hypothesis on which the study .of Muslim thought throws considerable light

According to most of them, it is always the same art and the same type or style of art which rises at one stage in the life‐history of each culture: one art or art form at its

dawn, another at its maturity, and yet another at its decline, and then gradually both art and the corresponding culture die. We do not accept this conclusion. The life…history of Greek art is not identical with that of European art or Hindu or Muslim .art

In some cultures, like the Egyptian, Chinese, Hindu, and Muslim, literature; in some ;others such as the French, German, and English architecture

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.and in the culture of the Greeks, music blossomed before any other art

The art of the Paleolithic people reached the maturity and artistic perfection which did not correspond to their stage of culture. In some cultures, as the Egyptian, art shows several waves, several ups and downs, rather than one cycle of birth, maturity, and .decline

Unlike most other cultures, Muslim culture has given no place to sculpture and its music has risen simultaneously with its architecture. Its painting is not an art that developed before all other arts. It was in fact the last of all its artistic developments. Thus, it is not true that the sequence of the rise of different arts is the same in all .cultures

Nor is it true that the same sequence appears in the style of each art in every culture. Facts do not support this thesis, for the earliest style of art in some cultures is .symbolic, in others naturalistic, formal, impressionistic, or expressionistic

Another group of the fourteenth/twentieth…century philosophers of history avoid these pitfalls and give an integral interpretation of history. To this group belong Northrop, Kroeber, Shubart, Berdyaev, Schweitzer, and Sorokin. Northrop, however, weakens his position by basing cultural systems on philosophies and philosophies on .science

He ignores the fact that many cultural beliefs are based on revelations or intuitive apprehensions. Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu cultures have philosophies based on revelation as much as on reason. The source of some social beliefs may even be irrational and non…rational, often contradicting

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.scientific theories

Kroeber's weakness consists in making the number of geniuses rather than the number of achievements the criterion of cultural maturity. Schweitzer rightly contends that each flourishing civilization has a minimum of ethical values vigorously .functioning, and that the decay of ethical values is the decay of civilizations

Neither the collapse of the Caliphate of Baghdad was caused entirely by the Mongol invasions nor was the ruin of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain affected by the attacks of Christian monarchs of the north; nor indeed was the second decline of the Muslim .world due merely to the imperialistic designs of Western powers

These were only contributory factors to these downfalls. The basic conditions of the .rise and fall of nations invariably arise from within

In each case the real cause was the lowering of moral standards brought about by centuries of luxury and overindulgence in worldly pleasures, resulting in disunity, social injustice, jealousies, rivalries, intrigues, indolence, and sloth…all the progeny of fabulous wealth and in the case of the second decline from about ۱۱۱۱/۱۷۰۰ to ۱۲۶۶/۱۸۵۰, all round moral degeneration combined with conformism of the worst type deadening .all original thought

.Without this moral downfall there would have been no cultural decline in Islam

As it has been said before a culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, but while it may be rising in one field it may yet be declining on the whale.

The politico…social rise or fall of a culture

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necessarily goes with its moral rise or fall. But the case seems to be different with .intellectual development

A people may decline in the politico…social sphere and yet its decline may itself under .suitable circumstances become a stimulus for its intellectual advance

The political and moral decline of the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad began in about the middle of the third/ninth century, and the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain and decadence of the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt in the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century. Yet the deep…rooted tradition of the patronage of learning in the Muslim world kept its intellectual achievements rising from peak to peak right up .to the time of the Mongol devastation

Thus, despite its downfall in other fields, in the field of learning Muslim culture saw its ascendancy right up to the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century. In fact this period of political and moral fall…the period during which Muslims everywhere lost their solidarity and the three Caliphates broke into petty States or sundry .dynasties…was exactly the period when the Muslim intellect reached its full flowering

It was during this period of political and moral decline that flourished such illustrious philosophers as al…Farabi, ibn Sina, Miskawaih, ibn Hazm, al…Ghazali, ibn Bajjah, ibn Tufail, ibn Rushd, and Fakhr al…Din Razi; the famous mystic Shihab al…Din Suhrawardi; great political philosophers like al…Mawardi and Nizam al…Mulk Tusi; renowned scientists and mathematicians like al…Majriti, ibn Yunus, ibn Haitham, ibn al…Nafis, al…Biruni, al…Bakri, al…Zarqah, `Umar Khayyam, ibn Zuhr, and

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al…Idrisi; and such celebrated literary figures as al…Tabari, al…Masudi, al…Mutanabbi, Firdausi, Baqillani, Sana'i, al…Ma'arri, Nasir Khusrau, al…Zamakhshari, Kashani, Niyami, .`Attar, and ibn al…Athir

Though three celebrities, Rumi, Sa'di, and Nasir al...Din Tusi, died long after the sack of Baghdad, they were actually the products of this very period and much of their works had been produced within it.(۱) When moral degeneration sets in, a culture's .intellectual achievements may stray but cannot avert the evil day

In this example there is a lesson for those who are using their high intellectual attainments for the conquest even of the moon, Venus, and Mars, for they may yet be culturally on the decline, if superabundance of wealth leads them to luxury, licence, .and moral degradation on the whole

C

In the Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, it is complained that histories written since the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century suffer from the defect that they ignore all developments in philosophy before the time of the .Greeks

This complaint, or rather indictment, is perfectly justified, not only in the case of the historians of the thirteenth/nineteenth century but also of those of the twelfth/eighteenth century. Every thinker of these two centuries understood history .as if it were identical with Western history

They viewed history as one straight line of events moving across the Western world; divided this line into three periods, ancient, medieval, and modern; and lumped together the Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, and Babylonian civilizations, each of which had passed through several stages of development, in

As Rumi's most important work, the Mathnawi, was written between ۶۵۹/۱۲۶۱ and -۱ ۶۷۰/۱۲۷۲, we have included him among writers of the centuries following the sack of .Baghdad

the briefest possible prelude (in some cases covering not even a page) to the ".Graeco…Roman period designated as "ancient

Histories of other civilizations and people did not count, except for those events which could be easily linked with the chain of events in the history of the West. Toynbee justly describes this conception of history as an egocentric illusion, and his view is .shared by all recent philosophers of history

Whatever their differences in other matters, in one thing the twentieth…century philosophers of history are unanimous, and that is their denunciation of the linear .conception of progress

We associate ourselves with them in this. Just as in biology progress has been explained by a trend from lower to higher, or from less perfect to more perfect, or from less differentiated and integrated to more differentiated and integrated, similarly Herder, Fichte, Rant, and Hegel and almost all the philosophers of the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries explained the evolution of human society by one principle, one social trend, and their theories were thus .stamped with the linear law of progress

The present…day writers criticism of them is perfectly justified in respect of their view of progress as a line, ascending straight or spirally, whether it is Fichte's line advancing as a sequence of certain values, or Herder's and Kant's from violence and war to Justice and peace, or Hegel's to ever…increasing freedom of the Idea, or Spencer's to greater and greater differentiation and integration, or Tonnie's advancing from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, or Durkheim's from a state

of society based on mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, or Buckle's from

diminishing influence of physical laws to an increasing influence of mental laws, or Navicow's from physiological determination to purely intellectual competition, or any .other line of a single principle explaining the evolution of human society as a whole

Every civilization has a history of its own and each has its own ancient, medieval, and modern periods. In most cases these periods are not identical with the ancient, medieval, and modern periods of Western culture starting from the Greek. Several cultures preceded the Western culture and some starting earlier are still .contemporaneous with it

They cannot be thrown into oblivion because they cannot be placed in the three periods of the cultures of the West, ancient, medieval, and modern. Western culture is not the measure of all humanity and its achievements. You cannot measure other cultures and civilizations or the whole of human history by the three…knotted yardstick .of progress in the West

Mankind consists of a number of great and small countries each having its own drama, its own language, its own ideas, its own passions, its own customs and habits, its own possibilities, its own goals, and its own life…course. If it must be represented lineally, it would not be by one line but several lines or rather bands of variegated and .constantly changing colours, reflecting one another and merging into one another

While the learned editors of the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, have endeavoured to remove one flaw

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in the treatment of ancient history, they have failed to remove similar flaws in the .treatment of what the Western writers designate as the "medieval" period of history

A very large part of this period is covered by the phenomenal rise and development of

Muslim thought which carried human achievement in the intellectual field, as in many .other fields, to one of its highest peaks

For this the most glorious part of medieval history not more than four out of forty…eight chapters have been assigned in the history ofPhilosophy, Eastern and .Western

Nor, indeed, has even a word…been said about the well…recognized role of Muslim philosophy in transmitting Greek thought to the West, in advancing human knowledge, in supplying a mould for the shaping of Western scholasticism, in developing empirical sciences, in bringing about the Italian…Renaissance, and in pro… .viding stimulus to the speculation of Western thinkers from Descartes to Kant

More-over, in the account given of the "modern" period of history, the philosophical achievements of the East, except those in India, have been completely omitted. The reader of this historical work gets the impression that from the time of Descartes to that of Sartre, i.e., the present day, the East, outside India, intellectually ceased to .exist

It is true that the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, is not alone characterized by these omissions. The same gaps, even more yawning, are found in the histories of philosophy written by Western scholars; but while in the works of the Westerners they are understandable, in those of

.the eastern scholars they are unpardonable

Nevertheless, in this particular case they became unavoidable for the able editors did intend to have some more chapters on Muslim philosophy, but the writer to whom these chapters were assigned…was also a minister of the State holding an important

.portfolio and his heavy official duties left him no time to write them

D

The history of Muslim thought throws a flood of light on the logic of history. A controversy has gone on for a long time about the laws that govern historical sequences. Vico in the twelfth/eighteenth century contended, under the deep impression of the lawfulness prevailing in natural sciences, that historical events also follow one another according to the unswerving laws of nature. The law of mechanical .causality is universal in its sway

The same view was held by Saint Simon, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and in recent times by Mandelbaum and Wiener. On the other hand, idealists like Max Weber, Windelband, and Rickert are of the view that the objects of history are not units with universal qualities; they are unique, unrepeatable events in a particular space and a .specific time

Therefore, no physical laws can be formed about them. Historical events are undoubtedly exposed to influences from biological, geological, geographical, and racial forces; yet they are always carried by human beings who use and surmount .these forces. Mechanical laws relate to facts but historical events relate to values

Therefore the historical order of laws is different from the physical laws of

mechanical causation. To us it seems that both the groups go to extremes. The empiricists take no account of the freedom of the will and the resolves, choices, and goals of human beings and the idealists forget that even human beings are not minds, but body…minds; and though they initiate events from their own inner resources, they .place them in the chain of mechanical causality

It is true that historical events and the lives of civilizations and cultures follow one another according to the inner laws of their own nature, yet history consists in the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic achievements of individuals and groups based on resolves and choices, using causation…a divine gift…as a tool, now obeying, now revolting against divine will working within them aid in the world around them, now co…operating and now fighting with one another, now falling, now rising, and thus .carving their own destinies

E

The thought of Hegel and of Marx is having a great influence on the development of .the philosophy of history. As is well known, Hegel is a dialectical idealist

The whole world for him is the development of the Idea, a rational entity, which advances by posing itself as a thesis; develops from itself its own opposite, antithesis; and the two ideas, instead of constantly remaining at war, get united in an idea which is the synthesis of both; and this synthesis becomes the thesis for another triad and thus triad after triad takes the world to higher and yet higher reaches

p: ٢١

.of progress

Thus, the historical process is a Process of antagonisms and their reconciliations. The Idea divides itself into the "Idea…in…itself" (the world of history) and the "Idea…in…its…otherness" (the world as nature). Hegel's division of the world into two watertight compartments has vitiated the thought of several of his successors, .Rickert, Windleband, and Spengler, and even of Bergson

If electrons, amoebas, fleas, fishes, and apes were to speak, they could reasonably ask why, born of the same cosmic energy, determined by the same laws, having the

.same limited freedom, they should be supposed to be mere nature having no history

To divide the world-stuff into nature and history is unwarranted. History consists of sequences of groups of events, and we have learnt since Einstein that objects in .nature are also groups of events

There is no essential difference between the two. The only difference is that up to a certain stage there is no learning by experience; beyond that there is. According to Hegel, the linear progress of the Idea or Intelligence, in winning rational freedom, culminates in the State, the best example of which is the German State. Such a line of .thought justifies internal tyranny, external aggression, and wars between States

It finds no place in the historical process for world organizations like the United Nations or the World Bank and is falsified by the factual existence of such institutions in the present stage of world history. Intelligence is really only one aspect of the human mind, and

p: ٢٢

there seems to be no ground for regarding this one aspect, the knowing aspect, of .only one kind of the world…stuff, i.e., mankind as the essence of the world…stuff

The mind of one who rejects Hegel's idealism at once turns to Marx. Marxian dialectic is exactly the same as Hegel's. But, according to Marx, the world…stuff is not the Idea, but matter. He uses this word, matter, in the sense in which it was used by the .thirteenth/nineteenth…century French materialists

But the idea of matter as inert mass has been discarded even by present…day physics. World…stuff is now regarded as energy which can take the form of mass. Dialectical materialism, however, is not disproved by this change of meaning of the word "matter." It can still be held in terms of a realistic dialectic…the terms in which the .present…day Marxists hold it

With the new terminology, then, the Marxist dialectic takes this form: Something real (a thesis) creates from within itself its opposite, another real (antithesis), which both, instead of warring perpetually with each other, get united into a synthesis (a third real) which becomes the thesis of another triad, and thus from triad to triad till, in the .social sphere, this dialectic of reals leads to the actualization of a classless society

Our objection to Hegel's position that he does not find any place for international organizations in the historical process does not apply to Marx, but the objection that Hegel considers war a necessary part of the historical process applies

p: ٢٣

.equally to him

Hegel's system encourages wars between nations; Marx's between classes. Besides, Marxism is self...contradictory, for while it recognizes the inevitability or necessity of the causal law, it also recognizes initiative and free creativity of classes in changing .the world

Both Marx and Hegel make history completely determined, and completely ignore the most universal law of human nature, the law that people, becoming dissatisfied with their situation at all moments of their lives except when they are in sound sleep, are in the pursuit of ideals and values (which before their realization are mere ideas); and thus if efficient causes push them on (which both Hegel and Marx recognize), final .(causes are constantly exercising their pull (which both of them ignore

Our recognition of final causes as determinants of the course of history leads us to the formulation of a new hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, human beings and their ideals are logical contraries or discreprants in so far as the former are real and the latter ideal, and real and ideal cannot be attributed to the same subject in the same context. Nor can a person and his ideal be thought of in the relation of subject .and predicate

For, an ideal of a person is what the person is not. There is no essential opposition between two ideals or between two reals, but there is a genuine incompatibility .between a real and an ideal. What is real is not ideal and whatever is ideal is not real

Both

are opposed in their essence. Hegelian ideas and Marxist reals are not of oppo- site nature.They are in conflict in their function. They are mutually warring ideas or .warring reals and are separated by hostility and hatred

The incompatibles of our hypothesis are so in their nature, but not in their function, and are bound by love and affection and, though rational discrepants, are volitionally and emotionally in harmony. In the movement of history real selves are attracted by .ideals, and then, in realizing them, are synthesized with them

This movement is dialectical, but it is totally different from the Hegelian or Marxist dialectic. Their thesis and antithesis are struggling against each other. Here, one is struggling not "against" but "for" the other. The formula of the dynamic of history, :according to this conception, will be

A real (thesis) creates from within itself an ideal (antithesis) which both by mutual harmony get united into another real (synthesis) that becomes the thesis of another triad and thus from triad to triad. The dialectic of human society, according to this formula, is not a struggle of warring classes or warring nations, but a struggle against limitations to realize goals and ideals, which goals and ideals are willed and loved .rather than fought against

This is a dialectic of love rather than of hatred. It leads individuals, masses, classes, nations, and civilizations from lower to higher and from higher to yet higher reaches of achievement. It is a dialectic which recognizes an over-all necessity of a

transcendentally determined process (a divine order), takes notice of the partial free… dom of social entities and of the place of mechanical determination as a tool in divine .and human hands

This hypothesis is not linear because it envisages society as a vast number of interacting individuals and intermingling, interacting classes, societies, cultures, and humanity as a whole, moving towards infinite ideals, now rising, now falling, but on the whole developing by their realization, like the clouds constantly rising from the foot…hills of a mountain range, now mingling, now separating, now flying over the peaks, now sinking into the valleys, and yet ascending from hill to hill in search of the .highest peak

This hypothesis avoids the Spencerian idea of steady progress, because it recognizes ups and downs in human affairs and rises and falls of different civilizations and their .thought at different stages of world history

It avoids measuring the dynamics of history by the three…knotted rod of Western cul… ture and does not shelve the question of change in human society as a whole. It leaves the door of future achievement open to all and does not condemn certain living .cultures to death

Briefly stated, the hypothesis to which the study of Muslim thought, as the study of .Muslim culture as a whole, lends support has a negative as well as a positive aspect

Negatively, it is non…organismic, non…cyclic, and non…linear; and, positively, it involves belief in social dynamics, in progress in human society through the ages by rises and falls, in the importance

of the role of ethical values in social advance, in the possibility of cultural regeneration, in the environmental obstacles as stimuli to human action, in freedom and purpose as the ultimate sources of change, and in mechanical determinism as an .instrument in divine and human hands

F

The chief aim of this work is to give an account not of Muslim culture as a whole, nor of Muslim thought in general, but only of one aspect of Muslim thought, i.e., Muslim philosophy. But since this philosophy had its beginning in a religion based on philosophical fundamentals and it developed in close association with other spheres of thought, sciences, humanities, and arts, we have thought it desirable to give brief .(accounts of these other disciplines as well (Book Five

Book Five has become necessary because in many cases the same thinkers were at .once philosophers, scientists, and writers on the Humanities and Fine Arts

Besides writing on philosophy al…Kindi wrote, to number only the main subjects, also on astrology, chemistry, optics, and music; al…Farabi on music, psychology, politics, economics, and mathematics; ibn Sina on medicine, chemistry, geometry, astronomy, theology, poetry, and music; Zakriya al…Razi on medicine and alchemy; al…Ghazali on theology, law, physics, and music; and the Ikhwan al…Safa on mathematics, .astronomy, geography, music, and ethics

Likewise ibn Haitham left works not only on philosophy but also on optics, music, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, and Nasir al…Din Tusi on mathematics, astronomy, physics, medicine, mineralogy, music, history, and ethics. In Muslim Spain, ibn Bajjah

wrote on philosophy, medicine, music, and astronomy; ibn Tufail on philosophy and medicine; and ibn Rushd on philosophy, theology, medicine, and astronomy. And what .is true of these thinkers is true of a host of others

In the Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, to which reference has already been made it has been rightly observed that the histories of philosophy written before the nineteenth century might be aptly described as the .histories of philosophers rather than the histories of philosophy

But it seems to us that when a history aims at giving an account of…theories and movements, it cannot do without dealing with philosophers, for the relation between them and the movements they start or the theories they propound is too intimate to .allow their complete severance

Therefore, in our endeavour to give a historical account of the movements, systems, and disciplines in Muslim thought we have made no effort to eliminate the treatment of individual philosophers where it has been called for. In this procedure we have fol… lowed the excellent example of T. J. de Boer who can be justly regarded as a pioneer .in this most neglected field

We have begun our treatment of the subject by giving in Book One a brief account of the whole field of philosophy in the pre…Islamic world in general and Arabia in particular. We have devoted Book Two to philosophical teachings of the Qur'an. This we have done with the express hope that these two books together will give the reader

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a correct idea of the real source of Muslim philosophy and enable him to view this .philosophy in its true perspective

Muslim philosophy like Muslim history in general has passed through five different stages. The first stage covers the period from the first first/seventh century to the fall of Baghdad. We have dealt with this period under the heading "Early Centuries." This is followed by a shock…absorbing period of about half a century. Its third stage is that ".of its second flowering treated under the heading "Later Centuries

It covers the period from the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth to the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century. The fourth stage is that of the most deplorable decline covering a century and a half. This is in the truest sense the Dark Age of Islam. With the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century begins its fifth stage covering the .period of the modern renaissance

Thus, in the curve of its history, Muslim philosophy has had two rises and two falls and .is now showing clear signs of a third rise

We have said very little about the periods of decline, for these have little to do with philosophical developments. During the first period of its greatness Muslim philosophy shows four distinct lines of thought. The first is the theologico…philosophical line, the second is mystical, the third philosophical and scientific, and the fourth is that taken by ".those whom we have called the "middle…roaders

.These have been treated respectively in Book Three, Parts ۱, ۲, ۳, and ۴

p: ۲۹

In Book Four we have traced the same lines of thought running through the second .rise of Islam in order to bring it in clear contrast with the first

During both of these periods of Islamic rise, considerable activity is noticeable in other .disciplines. We have dealt with all these in Book Five

The period of modern renaissance in Islam, a brief account of which is given in Book Eight, is marked by political struggle for emancipation from foreign domination and .freedom from conformism in both life and thought

The philosophers of this period are not mere philosophers. They are more political leaders, social reformers, and men of action. Therefore, although chapters ۷۲, ۷۳, ۷۴, ۷۷, ۸۰, and ۸۳ contribute little to academic philosophy, yet they throw a flood of light on the philosophies of life and history, and for that reason have been considered .indispensable for our work

So much about the past. But what about the present and how about the future? The position of philosophy amongst the Muslim peoples today is no worse than it is in the rest of the world. What type of philosophical thought the future has in store for them .we shall try to forecast in our concluding remarks

Chapter ۱:Pre-Islamic Indian Thought

point

Pre-Islamic Indian Thought by C.A Qadir, M.A, Professor of Philosophy, Government (College, Lahore (Pakistan

Maurice Bloomfield says paradoxically in The Religion of the Rig..Veda that "Indian religion begins before its arrival in India."(۱) By this he means to imply that Indian religion is a continuation of the

.Maurice Bloomfield, The Religion of the Rig..Veda, Putnam, N.Y., ۱۹۰۸, p. ۱۹ -۱

primitive faith of the Indo-European race to which the Aryans that came to India .belonged

The Sanskrit word deva (to shine) for God is similar to the Latin word deus; yaj a“ Sanskrit word for worship is common to more than one Indo…European language; ”.while the Vedic god Mitra has his counterpart in the Iranian god Mithra

From a comparative study of the beliefs and practices of the Teutonic, Hellenic, Celtic, Slavonic, Italian, Armenian, and Persian peoples which all sprang from the Indo…European race, it has been established beyond the slightest doubt that the basis of their religion was an animistic belief in a very large number of petty gods, each of .which had a special function

They were worshipped with sacrifice, accompanied with potent formulas and prayers. .Magic was highly regarded and much used

It is greatly regretted that there is neither any formal history nor any archaeological remain to throw light on the early home of this ancient race or on the time when the great historical people hived off from it. Our principal source for the history, religion, .and philosophy of the Indian branch is the Vedas besides the Epics and the Puranas

The Vedas

point

Among the Vedas, the oldest is Rg…Veda which consists of more than a thousand hymns composed by successive generations of poets during a period of many centuries. The hymns are connected in various ways with the sacrifices, the domestic ceremonies, and the religious speculation of the time, and are concerned chiefly with ,the worship of gods

p: ۳۱

who represent personification of natural forces, and the propitiation of demoniac .beings

In the Indo…Iranian period the refreshing drink prepared from the somaplant was offered to gods in a special ritual and the singing of a hymn was a necessary part of

the ritual. The Aryans brought this custom with them and continued to compose verses for the sama…ritual and for the occasions of annual sacrifices in their new homeland. As the hymns were to be sung, a class of priests arose whose duty it was .to recite poems of praise in honour of gods

The priests who could sing better hymns and were in possession of a secret lore, which enabled them by conducting sacrifices in the right way to win the favour of gods for their patrons, were in great demand. Consequently, a number of priestly families vied with one another in composing hymns in the best language and metre then .available

The Rg…Veda gives evidence of seven such families each bearing the name of a .patriarch to whom the hymns are ascribed

At first the hymn collections of six families were brought together and then of nine. At a much later stage some scholars collected one hundred and ninety one poems which were taught as the last section of the oral curriculum of hymns. Thus, there became .ten books of the Rg…Veda

The mantras of the Atharva…Veda consist largely of spells for magical purposes and advocate pure and unalloyed polytheism. The other Vedas are entirely sacrificial in purpose. The

p: ٣٢

Sama…Veda consists of verses borrowed from the Rg…Veda to be applied to .soma…sacrifice. The Yajur…Veda consists of ritual formulas of the magical type

For a long time the number of the Vedas was limited to three, the Atharva Veda being totally excluded from the group of the Vedas. In support of this contention the following verse from Manu can be cited: “From Agni, Vayu, and Ravi, He drew forth for the accomplishment of sacrifice the eternal triple Veda, distinguished as Rik, Yajush and Saman.”(١) Similarly, in Satapatha Brahnmanas it is said, “The Rik…Yajush…Saman (verses are the threefold science.”(٢

A probable reason for the exclusion of the Atharva_Veda from the Vedas is that "it consists mostly of magic spell, sorcery, and incantations which were used by the non_Aryans and the lower classes to achieve worldly goods such as wealth, riches, children, health, and freedom from disease .... The Atharva Veda was recognized later on when hymns relating to sacrifices seem to have been added to it to gain (recognition from the orthodoxy." (٣

Vedic Conception of God

point

The religion of the Vedas is polytheism. It has not the charm and grace of the pantheon of the Homeric poems; but it certainly stands nearer the origin of the gods. All gods whether great or small are deified natural phenomena. The interesting thing about them is that they are identified with the glorious things whose deifications they .are and are also distinguished from them

They are still thought of as being sun, moon, rain, wind, etc., yet each god

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.Manu, I. ٢٣ -١

.Satapatha Brahmanas, IV: ۶, ٧ -٢

Manunhai C. Pandya, Intelligent Man's Guide to Indian Philosophy, Bombay, ١٩٣۵; p. -٣ .٢١

is conceived as a glorious being who has his home in heaven and who comes sailing in his far_shining car to the sacrifice and sits down on the grass to hear his own praise recited and sung and to receive the offerings.(١) The hymns sung by the priests were mainly invocations of the gods meant to accompany the oblation of soma_juice and .the fire_sacrifice of the melted butter

The Vedas are not consistent in their account of the gods. In one myth the sun is a male, in another_a female. The sun and the moon are mentioned in one place as

rivals, elsewhere as husband and wife. The dog is extolled in one place as a deity and in another mentioned as a vile creature. Again the sun, the sky, and the earth are looked upon sometimes as natural objects governed by particular gods and .sometimes as themselves gods who generate and control other beings

In the Rg_Veda, heaven and earth are ordinarily regarded as the parents of gods, pitra(۲) or matra.(۳) In other passages heaven (dyaus) is separately styled as father and the earth (prithivi) as mother.(۴) At other places, however, they are spoken of as .having been created

Thus it is said,(۵) that he who produced heaven and earth must have been the most skilful artisan of all the gods. Again, Indra is described as having formed them, to follow him as chariot wheels do a horse. At other places the creation of the earth and the heaven is

p: ۳۴

Farqtihar, An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, Oxford University Press, -۱ .۱۹۲۰, p. ۱۳

.Rg Veda, i:۱۵۹, ۲; iii: ۳, ۱۱ -۲

.Ibid., ix: ۸۵, ۱۲; x:۳۵, ۳ -۳

.Ibid., i : ۸۹, ۴ -۴

.Ibid., i: ۱۶۰, ۲ -۵

.ascribed to Soma and Pushan

Thus, while the gods are regarded in some passages of the Rg_Veda as the offsprings of heaven and earth, they are at other places considered independent of these deities .and even their creators

In various texts of the Rg_Veda the gods are spoken of as being thirty_three in number. Thus it is said in the Rg_Veda: "Come hither Nasatyas, Asvins, together with the thrice eleven gods, to drink our nectar."(۱) Again, "Agni, the wise gods lend an ear to their worshippers. God with the ruddy steeds, who lovest praise, bring hither those

(three and thirty."(۲

In the Satapatha Brahmanas this number of thirty…three gods is explained as made up of eight vasus, eleven rudras, and twelve adityas, together with heaven and earth, or, according to another passage, together with Indra and Prajapati instead of .heaven and earth

The enumeration of gods as thirty…three is not adhered to throughout the Vedas. In the Rg…Veda, the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous: "Three thousand, three hundred, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."(۳) Thus verse which is one of the many shows that the Vedic Indian believed in the existence of a .much larger number of supernatural beings than thirty…three

The gods were believed to have had a beginning; they were stated to be mortal, but capable of overcoming death by the practice of austerity. The Rg Veda says that the gods acquired immortality by drinking soma. Still the gods are not self…existent or .unbeginning beings

It has been

۱- Ibid., i: :۳۴, II.

۲- Ibid., i: ۴۵, ۲.

۳- Ibid., iii: ۳۹.

seen that they are described in various passages of the Rg…Veda as offsprings of heaven and earth. In various texts of the Rg…Veda the birth of Indra is mentioned, and (his father and mother are also alluded to. (۱

:The Vedic gods can be classified as deities of heaven, air, and earth

Celestial Gods .۱

The oldest god is Dyaus, generally coupled with Prithivi when the two are regarded as

universal parents. Another is Varuna, the greatest of the Vedic gods besides Indra. It is he who sustains and upholds physical and moral order. In the later Vedas, when Prajapati became creator and supreme god, the importance of Varuna waned, and in the post Vedicperiod Varuna retained only the dominion of waters as god of the sky.

Various aspects of the solar activity are represented by five gods, namely, Mitra, a personification of the sun's beneficent power; Surya, the proper name of the sun, regarded as the husband of dawn; Savitri, the life…giving activity of the sun; Pusan, a pastoral deity personifying the bountiful power of the sun; and Visnu occupying the central place in this pantheon.

۲. Atmospheric Gods

The most important of these gods is Indra, a favourite national deity of the Aryan Indians. He is not an uncreated being. It is said of him, "Thy father was the parent of a most heroic son; the maker of Indra, he also produced the celestial and unconquerable thunder . . . was a most skilful workman."(۲) Again, "A vigorous (god) begot him, a vigorous (son), for the battle;

۱- Ibid., iv: ۱۷, ۴, ۱۲.

۲- Ibid., iv: ۱۷, ۴.

a heroic female (nari) brought him forth, a heroic soul."(۱)

His whole appearance is golden; his arms are golden; he carries a golden whip in his hands; and he is borne on a shining golden car with a thousand supports. His car is drawn by two golden steeds with flowing golden manes. He is famous for slaying Vrta after a terrific battle, as a result of which water is released for man and light is restored to him.

Certain immoral acts are also attributed to him. He occasionally indulges in acts of violence such as slaying his father or destroying the car of Dawn. Less important gods

of this group are Trita, Apamnapat and Matarisvan. The sons of Rudra, the malignant deities of the Vedas, are the Maruts (the storm…gods) who help Indra in his conflicts. .The god of wind is Vayu while that of water is Apah

Terrestrial Gods .۳

Rivers are deified. Thus Sindu (Indus), Vipas (Bias), and Sutudri (Sutlej) are invoked in… the Rg…Veda. The most important god is Sarasvati, often regarded as the wife of Brahma. Another very important god is Agni, the god of fire. The number of hymns addressed to him far exceeds those addressed to any other, divinity with the exception of Indra. In the Rg…Veda he is frequently spoken of as a goblin…slayer. Another god is Soma, the divine drink which makes those who drink it immortal. A priest says in the Rg…Veda: "We have drunk Soma, we have become immortal, we ,have entered into light

p: ۳۷

.Ibid., vii: ۲۰, ۵ -۱

".and we have known gods

In addition to these, there is a host of abstract deities and also deities of less importance which cannot be described here for want of space. Suffice it to say that an attempt was made by the sages (rsis) to introduce order in the bewildering multiplicity of gods. As several gods had similar functions, they were in some cases bracketed together, so that it might be said that when Indra and Agni performed identical .functions, Agni was Indra or Indra was Agni

Hence arose many dual gods. A farther effort in the direction of systematization was made through what Max Miller has called henotheism a tendency to address any of the gods, say, Agni, Indra, Varuna, or any other deity, "as for the time being the only ".god in existence with an entire forgetfulness of all other gods

Macdonell has a different theory to explain the so called henotheism by ascribing to it

exaggeration, thus retaining the charge of polytheism against the Veda. Some modern Hindus under the influence of Swami Dayananda repudiate both these theories as inconsistent with the true spirit of the Vedas "(۱)He is One, sages call Him by different names, e.g., Agni, Yama, Maarishvan."(۲)

No doubt, a few verses of this nature can be found in the Vedas; but the consensus of scholars is that monotheistic verses are a product of the later Vedic period and that they do nt express the dominant strain of the Vedic thought. Shri Krishna Saksena

p: ۳۸

۱- Sir Gokal Chand Narang, Message of the Vedas, New Book Society, Lahore, ۱۹۴۶, pp. ۴۲_۵۶.

۲- Rg_Veda, i: ۱۶۴. ۴۶.

in his chapter "Indian Philosophy" in A History of Philosophical Systems edited by V. Ferm says that the early mantras contain a religion of nature_worship in which powers of nature like fire (agni) and wind (vayu) are personified.

In later hymns and the Brahmanas, monotheistic tendencies began to crop up a little. Swami Dayananda was a product of Hindu_Muslim culture and his insistence on monotheism shows the extent to which Muslim thought has influenced Indian religious beliefs.

Vedic Eschatology

The Rg_Veda makes no distinct reference to a future life except in its ninth and tenth books. Yama, the god of death, was the first of the mortals to die. He discovers the way to the other world; guides other men there, assembles them in a home, which is secured for them for ever. He grants luminous abodes to the pious and is an object of terror for the wicked.

Yama is said to have two insatiable dogs with four eyes and wide nostrils that act as his messengers and convey the spirits of men to the abode of their forefathers. After a person's dead body has been burnt, his spirit soars to the realm of eternal light in a

car or on wings and enters upon a more perfect life which fulfils all of his desires and .grants him unending happiness

Since the Vedic gods did not have purely spiritual pleasures but were often subject to sensual appetites, it can be said that the pleasures promised to the pious in the world to

come were not altogether spiritual. Yama is described as carousing with the gods,(۱) Gandharvas, a class of gods who are described as hairy like dogs and monkeys, often assume handsome appearance to seduce the earthly females.(۲) Indra is said to have .had a happy married life

Brahmanas

Each of the four Vedas has three sub-divisions: the Samhitas (sacred texts), the Brahmanas (commentaries), and the Aranyakas (forest books): The Brahmanas are, therefore, an integral part of the Vedas. Sayana, a great scholar of the Vedas, says, "Veda is the denomination of the Mantras and the Brahmanas."(۳) (Swami Dayananda (.differs on this point

By the Mantras are meant hymns and prayers; and the Brahmanas are intended to elucidate objects which are only generally adverted to in the hymns. The Brahmanas comprise precepts which inculcate religious duties, maxims which explain those .precepts, and arguments which relate to theology

Considering the fact that the Brahmanas often quote from the Vedas and devote themselves to the clarification of the ritualistic and the philosophical portions of the Vedas, it may be concluded that the Samhitas must have existed in their present form .before the compilation of the Brahmanas was undertaken

In fact in the Brahmanass, we find fully developed the whole Brahmanical system, of .which we have but faint indications in the Vedas

We have the whole body of religious and social institutions far more complicated than the simple ritual of the Samhitas; four castes with the Brahmins at the top and the Sudras at the bottom have been

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Ibid., x:۱۳۵, ۱ -۱
Atharva Veda, v:۳۷, ۱۱ f -۲
M. Muller. Ed. Rg Veda -۳

recognized both in theory and in practice…all this shows that the Brahmanas must have been composed a long time after the Vedas.

It is, however, obvious that the Brahmanas were a kind of a scriptural authority for the Brahmanical form of worship and social institutions.

Upanisads

The third integral part of the Vedas, namely, the Aranayakas, intended for the study of the anchorites in the forests in the third stage of their life, led ultimately to the Upanisads or Vedantas as the concluding portion of the Vedas. These were meant for the ascetics in the fourth stage of their lives called the Sannyasa Asrama.

Literally, the word Upanisad means "a sitting besides." i. e., a lesson taught by the teacher to the pupils sitting by his side. These discourses expounded in enigmatic formulae a series of esoteric doctrines to the selected few students, mainly Brahmins, who were deemed, fit to receive such a course of instruction.

Considering the age which gave birth to the Upanisads for understanding some of the major problems of life, one marvels at the depth and insight of the early Hindu seers. Their attitude towards the Vedas was not one of veneration; it was on the contrary an attitude of doubt and disrespect. While they considered Vedas to be of divine origin, they felt at the same time that the Vedic knowledge was inferior to the true divine insight and could not liberate them.(۱)

They were not concerned with the world of phenomena and denounced with all the force

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.Radhakrishnan, The Philosophy of the Upanisads, Allen Unwin London, ۱۹۲۴, p: ۲۵ -۱

at their disposal the rich and elaborate ritualism then prevalent. Sacrifice, an integral part of the Vedic faith, had no significance for then. Their interest lay not in the outer .world but in the inner and, within that, in the mystery of the self

The introverted Brahmins were accordingly carried far beyond the realm of the anthropomorphic deities of the early Vedic period and devoted attention to that all…transcending principle from which all natural forces and events were supposed to proceed. The Upanisads, however, fall short of offering a coherent presentation of the Brahmanic doctrine of the Universal Soul…in…all…things. "This is only found in them in fragments, some small, some large. And in addition these fragments are the work of various schools and various ages. Those who have described the Upanisads as chaotic are not altogether wrong."(۱)

It would be hard to say what philosophical opinions might not be supported on their authority, for the most part contradictory statements find a place in them, yet the tendency is on the whole towards pantheism. The Upanisads teach the identity of the soul of all beings both animate and inanimate with the Universal Soul. Since the Universal Soul dwells in all, one finds one's own self in all things, both living and non…living.

In this light alone can the meaning of the famous tat tvam asi (That art thou) of the Upanisads be understood. The human self is not a part of the Divine Self, but is the .Brahman…Atman whole and undivided

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Albert Schweitzer, Indian Thought and Its Development, Adam Charles Black, - ۱

.London, ۱۹۵۱, p. ۳۲

The Self is consequently a single principle, which, philosophically speaking, can offer .an explanation for the entire spectacle of nature

It is often said that the pillars on which the edifice of Indian philosophy rests are Atman and Brahman. These terms have no fixed connotation in the Upanisads. Generally speaking, Atman is used to designate self or soul, while Brahman is used to .denote the primary cause of things

What is remarkable about these terms is that though their significance is different, one denoting an inner world of subjectivity and the other an objective principle of explanation, yet in course of time the two came to be used interchangeably…both .signifying an eternal principle of the universe

The notion of the self was arrived at through introspection and it was thought by the Upanisads thinkers that the outer reality should correspond exactly with the psychical reality within. In this way what was simply a psychical principle came to be recognized .as a world principle

This strain of thought was supported by another which objectively traced the visible universe to a single source, namely, Brahman, and Brahman was identified with the Atman. Thus, two independent currents of thought met together and paved the way to monism of an idealistic type which has remained till now the hallmark of Indian .philosophy

By combining subjective and objective principles into one, the ultimate principle partook of the characteristics of both…it became infinite as well as spiritual. All this is very well expressed in Chandogya…Upanisad in a

dialogue between a father and a son. The sum and substance of the story is that the primal spiritual principle is all…comprehensive and that the principle is no other than .the self of the person then engaged in the discussion

With regard to the nature of Brahman (the Absolute) there is a great divergence of opinion. At some places He is conceived as cosmic, i.e., all…comprehensive, at others acosmic, i.e., all…exclusive. Further, at some places Brahman is imagined as the imper…sonal Absolute without attributes; at other places he is recognized as the highest spiritual Being that unites all forms of perfection in Himself.

Hence it would be no exaggeration to say that though the Upanisads contain flashes of insight, yet they are not a self…contained homogeneous system and that they also lack completeness.

It is for this reason that Samkara believes that there are two types of doctrines in the Upanisads: esoteric, understanding God as the impersonal, unknowable Absolute without attributes, and the other exoteric, regarding God as a Person who manifests Himself in the various divinities.

The second interpretation of the Absolute as a Person led to the development of a theology largely theistic in spirit yet polytheistic in practice, since it sanctioned symbol…worship which expressed itself in various forms of idolworship. The Upanisads are not, however, responsible for the excesses of later theology. In them breathes a spirit of monism. They preach a cult of mystical union with the Absolute, and suggest practical methods for its realization.

In the main

p: ۴۴

the stress is laid upon complete detachment from all that is mundane and belongs to the world of phenomena. Accordingly, one finds in the Upanisads a whole series of sayings in which complete renunciation is recommended. “When all desires which are in his heart disappear, then man becomes immortal.

Here he has already reached Brahman. As the old slough of a snake lies on an ant…hill, so now does the body lie there.”(۱) According to the Upanisads, the highest merit called Preryas, which consists in the realization of one's true self, can be reached

through knowledge alone. The purpose of ethics, on the other hand, is quite distinct, .namely, mundane good called Preyas which is reached by moral actions

The two ends are consequently poles apart, one concerned with the timeless good and the other with the temporal and evanescent good. It is said in Katha_Upanisad(۲) that the ethical and the spiritual goals are opposed to each other as light and darkness and cannot co_exist. A man has to renounce all activity for worldly goods if he wants to achieve spiritual unity with the Supreme Being. One cannot, therefore, select both knowledge and action as two ends of life, since the highest end must be _ .one and not many

The ideal of detachment was emphasized by the Indian thinkers not only for the reason that it was necessitated by their theory of human deliverance, but also because they regarded the whole phenomenal world of names, forms, and plurality as maya or

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.Brhd_aranyaka Upanisad, iv: ۴ -۱
.Katha_Upanisad, ۲: ۱_۵ -۲

a mere unreality, an illusion having only a temporary reality which is transcended .ultimately in the being of the Supreme Self

The Upanisads demand the votaries of Brahma to ponder over the illusoriness and unreality of the world of senses and to extricate themselves from its temptations and enchantments by contemplation of a transcendental reality within the soul of each .person. Thus can a person get to spiritual heights and achieve mukti or salvation

Hence along with the renunciation of the phenomenal world another thing required is the concentration of the spirit on the supersensible reality. The Upanisads contain .detailed instructions on this subject

The aim is to reach a stage of ecstasy in which a person has the psychical experience

.of feeling one with the Ultimate Reality

The ethics...negating tendencies, however, could not be maintained consistently in face of the demands and concrete realities of life. The ideal of human salvation as outlined by the Upanisads cannot be achieved easily and so many are destined to fail. This is realized by the Indian sages. "What is hard for many even to hear, what many fail to understand even though they hear: a marvel is the one that can teach it and (lucky is its obtainer; a marvel is he that knows it when taught by the wise."(١

The majorities are born again after death and can win release from the cycle of births and deaths through the performance of good deeds. Thus ethics rejected by Brahmanic mysticism enters through the doctrine

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.Ibid., I:ii ٧ -١

.of the Transmigration of Souls...a doctrine unknown to the Vedas

The doctrine referred to above appears in connection with a myth. "All who depart from this world go to the moon. The waxing half fills itself with their lives; in the waning half it is effecting their rebirth. The moon is the gate of the heaven. He who .knows how to reply to it, him it allows to pass by

He who cannot reply, it sends him as rain down to the earth; he is reborn here and there according to his deeds and knowledge as worm, moth, fish, bird, lion, wild bear, jackal, tiger, man, or whatever it may be. For when a man comes to the moon, the '. . . . moon asks: `Who art thou? 'Then he ought to answer: Iam thou

If he speaks thus, then the moon lets him get away, out above itself."(١) One finds no reference to the myth in the Vedas. From this it is concluded that it is not Aryan in .origin but belonged to the religious world of the aboriginal inhabitants of India

The law which governs the kind of birth a soul is destined to have after each death is the law of karma, which signifies that nothing can happen in the moral world without a

cause. But the recognition of the fact that moral events are caused by antecedent factors cannot explain the palpably indemonstrable and poetic way in which the moral .causes are believed to operate

Those moral

Katha Upanisad, ۲:۱-۵ -۱

causes can work in samsara, that is to say, in a series of births and deaths, all of which do not necessarily pertain to human beings, is a hypothesis of a very doubtful nature .and utility

That the doctrine of reincarnation is inconsistent with the Brahmanic mysticism of the identity of the individual with the Universal Soul goes without saying. Instead of the doctrine that every individual soul returns to the Universal Soul after inhabiting the body once, we are required to believe in a theory which starts from new premises al… .together

This theory is based on the supposition that souls are prisoners in the world of sense and can return to their Primal Source not at once after their first death, as required by the theory of mystical absorption of the Brahmins, but after undergoing a long process of reincarnation necessitating a series of births in the animate and inanimate .realms

Schweitzer thinks(۱) that the acceptance of this doctrine created insuperable difficulties for Hindu thought. On the older hypothesis of mystical reunion with the Divine Source it was easy to explain world redemption on the assumption that all .souls returned to their Source after their death

But if the theory of reincarnation is accepted, world redemption becomes possible only if all souls reach the level of human existence and become capable of acquiring that knowledge and conduct which is required for liberation and of which human

.beings alone are capable

The Epic Period – Two great events belong to this

.Albert Schweitzer, op. tit., p. ۵۱ -۱

period. The first is the expedition of Rama from Oudh to Ceylon to recover his wife Sita who had been carried off by Ravana, the king of that island, and the second is the struggle for supremacy between two rival Ksatriya groups, the Pandavas and the .Kauravas, in which Lord Krsna played a significant part

Rama is an avatar, i. e., a divine incarnation of Visnu, who being the preserver of the universe had to leave his celestial abode very often and to assume different forms in order to destroy evil and establish truth. The purpose of this avatar was to kill the ten…headed Ravana, who had pleased the mighty gods through his austerities and as a result had received a boon from them which was that he could not be killed by any .god

Feeling secure, he started a campaign of terror against both gods and men. The gods approached Brahma who had granted immunity to Ravana. He remarked that Ravana could be killed by a god assuming the form of a man since Ravana had not been granted immunity from mankind. Visnu undertook to be born as a man to rid the world .of evil

He was accordingly born in the house of a king, Dasaratha by name, who ruled over Ayodhya and bore the name of Rama. As he came of age he married Sita, who "was an incarnation of Laksmi, Visnu's wife, and was born of no woman but of mother earth herself, and was picked up

(by Janaka from a paddy field."(۱

Rama became the victim of court intrigues, and for fourteen years had to suffer exile in jungles from where Sita was carried off by Ravana. To rescue Sita from the clutches of Ravana, Rama contracted military alliance with ganuman, the king of monkeys, with whose active support he reached Ceylon and learnt the secrets of Ravana's power from a brother of Ravana. Then ensued a fierce battle in which the .armies suffered losses

At last Ravana came out and met Rama in a single combat. "Each like a flaming lion fought the other; head after head of the ten…necked one did Rama cut away with his deadly arrows, but new heads ever rose in place of those cut off, and Ravana's death seemed no wise nearer than before. The arrows that had slain Maricha and Khara .and Bali could not take the king of Lanka's life away

Then Rama took up the Brahma weapon given to him by Agastya, the Wind lay in its (weapon's) wings, the Sun and Fire in its head, in its mass the weight of Meru and Mandara. Blessing that shaft with Vedic Mantras, Rama set it with his mighty bow and loosed it and it sped to its appointed place and cleft the breast of Ravana and, bathed (in blood, returned and entered Rama's quiver."(۲

The most popular avatar of Visnu is Lord Krsna, whose main object was to kill Kansa, a demon born of a woman, and who

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.P. Thomas, Epic Myths and Legends of India, Bombay, p. ۱۴ -۱
.Ibid., p. ۱۷ -۲

was well known for his childish tricks and many practical jokes on milk…maids. He was, .however, a great warrior and a strategist. He killed many demons and kings

Bhagavad…Gita – It was Lord Krsna who sang the Bhagavad…Gita (the song celestial) to Arjuna, giving the most widely accepted view of life among the Hindus. Says Mahatma Gandhi, "I find a solace in the…Bhagavad…Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see

not a ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita. I feel a verse here and there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies, and if they have ".left no scar on me I owe it all to the teachings of the Bhagavad…Gita

According to Sankaracharya, a great scholiast, the main function of the Gita is to epitomize the essentials of the whole Vedic teachings. A knowledge of its teachings leads to the realization of all aspirations. The real purpose of this great song, as Zimmer thinks,(۱) is to harmonize the non…Brahmanical pre…Aryan thought of .aboriginal India with the Vedic ideas of the Aryan invaders

The Gita, therefore, "displays a kaleidoscopic interworking of the two traditions that for some ten centuries had been contending for the control and mastery of the Indian mind. Its teachings are founded upon the Upanisadic principle of an all…unifying, transcendental reality, but they also accommodate not only the gods of the earlier Vedic pantheon but also

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۱- Zimmer, Philosophies of India, Routledge Kegan Paul, London, ۱۹۵۲, p. ۳۷۸.

.the philosophic and devotional formulae of the non…Aryan and aboriginal tradition

It was not an easy task. The Gita had to pick up scattered and heterogeneous material to reconcile the irreconcilable tendencies of that age and to present a unified view of life. Little wonder that the attempt has appeared to the Western scholars as (no better than an `ill…assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions.'(۱

There were the Vedas with their belief in multiple divinities; there were the Upanisads with their revolt against the ritualism of the Vedas and their anthropomorphic conception of gods; there was the doctrine of renunciation; and finally there were the Sanikhya and the Yoga principles. And if we add to them the heretical tendencies, particularly those represented by Buddhism, we realize how confusing the situation .was and what an uphill task Lord Krsna had before him

It would be futile to look for a consistent and neat metaphysical system in the Gita, for the Gita is not primarily a book of recondite and abstruse thinking, written with the object of presenting a world…view. It has a much loftier purpose, which is to relate the broad principles of metaphysical reality to the fundamental aspirations of mankind. This is not accomplished through abstract reasoning which only a few can understand but by selecting a specific situation involving a moral dilemma and pointing out how it .is overcome

The occasion was a battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The latter were led by Arjuna whose spirits were unmanned and

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.Hopkins, quoted by Desai in the Gita according to Gandhi, Ahmedabad, p. ۱۳ -۱

who felt reluctant to start the battle seeing on both sides his friends, relations, and teachers who were likely to be killed in the event of a war. At this juncture his charioteer who was none other than Lord Krsna himself addressed to him the Song Celestial, propounding to him as well as to the whole of mankind the Yoga of selfless .(action (karma…yoga

The significance of this teaching will become obvious if we refer to the two ideals which were prevalent then: one, the negative one of renunciation and the other, the positive one, of active life. The first recommended complete withdrawal from the work a day world and the second encouraged living in society undertaking all the .obligations implied thereby

The object of the Gita is to discover a golden mean, to reconcile as it were the claims of renunciation and active participation in the affairs of society. This is done through the doctrine of karma…yoga which means doing one's duty without the thought of .consequences

Giving up or carrying on one's work, both lead to salvation; but of the two, carrying" on one's work is the more excellent," says Lord Krsna in the Bhagavad…Gita. He also

says, “Neither does man attain to (the state of) being without work by undertaking no work, nor does he reach perfection by simply shunning the world.” What is required is a spirit of detachment where the heart of a person is free from the outward motives to action. “Thy interest shall only be

p: ۵۳

.directed to the deed, never to the fruits thereof,” says Lord Krsna

A natural consequence of this theory is that even what is judged as evil from human standards can be approved of, if the agent feels that the task selected by him is one which must be fulfilled. “Even if a thorough scoundrel loves me and nothing else, he must be deemed good; for he has well resolved.”(۱) “Even if thou wert the most sinful of all sinners, yet thou wouldst pass over all guilt with the boat of knowledge alone.”(۲) With these words Arjuna is urged to fight against his relations, for his killing would not .be an evil: it would be a necessary consequence of the duty he has to discharge

The ethics of detachment as preached by the Gita is laudable no doubt, but, as Schweitzer says, “It grants recognition to activity, only after activity has renounced natural motives and its natural meaning.”(۳) An action loses its significance when it ceases to be purposive. The Gita raises a voice of protest against the soul…killing and .life…negating cult of renunciation, but it has not gone far enough

Renunciation remains when the end of an activity is no concern of a person. “The Bhagavad…Gita has a sphinx…like character. It contains such marvellous phrases about inner detachment from the world, about the attitude of the mind which knows no hatred and is kind, and about loving self…devotion to God, that we are wont to (overlook its non…ethical contents.”(۴

The Heterodox Systems

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Among the systems

.Gita, xviii: ۴۸ -۱

.Ibid., iv: ۳۶ -۲

.Albert Schweitzer, op. cit., p. ۱۹۱ -۳

.Ibid., p. ۱۹۵ -۴

which defied the authority of the Vedas may be mentioned the Carvaka, Jainism, and :Buddhism

The Carvaka .۱

This system seems to be fairly old. It is mentioned in the Rg_Veda, the Epics, and the Bhagavad_Gita. The main work on the system, the Brhaspati_Sutra (۶۰۰ B.C.), is lost .and its teachings have to be reconstructed from criticism of it in other works

The Carvaka is a non_Vedic, materialistic, and anti_supernaturalistic doctrine which holds that only this world exists and there is nothing beyond. There is no future life. Madhava Acharya says in Sarvadarsanasangrgha, "The efforts of Carvaka are indeed :hard to be eradicated, for the majority of living beings hold by the refrain

;While life is yours, live joyously

:None can escape Death's searching eye

,When once this frame of ours they burn

(How shall it e'er again return?"(۱

The mass of men, in accordance with the Sastras of policy and enjoyment are found" to follow only the doctrine of Carvaka. Hence another name for that school is (Lokayata _ a name well accordant with the thing signified."(۲

The four elements alone are the ultimate principles and these are earth, water, fire, and air. Only the perceived exists; the unperceivable does not exist, simply for the reason of its never having been perceived. The only source of knowledge and the

criterion of validity is perception. Every other source including that of inference is rejected. Inferential knowledge involves inductive relations and can never be .demonstrably certain

Empirical generalizations may possess a high degree of probability, but their operation in unknown

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۱- S. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, Oxford .University Press, London, ۱۹۵۷, p. ۲۲۸

۲- .Ibid

cases can never be guaranteed. To avoid this difficulty, if it is maintained that the empirical laws connect the common features of the particular instances observed by a person, the Carvaka objects to it by saying that such a course would leave the .particulars unrelated and that it is the particulars alone which matter

As against the Upanisads which postulated five elements, the Carvaka admits of only four discarding the fifth one, viz., space. The whole universe including souls is interpreted strictly in terms of these elements. The self is nothing but the physical body as characterized by sentience. "The soul is but the body characterized by the attributes signified in the expressions, I am stout, I am youthful, I am grown up, I am (old, etc. It is not something other than that body)."(۱)

The Carvaka rejects outright all types of spiritual values and has faith in the present world only. "There is no world other than this; there is no heaven and no hell; the realms of Siva and like regions are invented by stupid impostors of other schools of .... thought

The wise should enjoy the pleasures of this world through the proper visible means of agriculture, keeping cattle, trade, political administration, etc."(۲) The authority of the Vedas is repudiated not only on the ground that their teachings are irrational, but also because of the inconsistencies which render it impossible to know what they really

.teach

The Carvaka is a protest against the excessive spirituality of the early Brahmanic

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.Ibid., p. ۲۳۵ -۱
.Ibid -۲

thought. It recognizes neither god nor conscience. It cares not for a belief in the life to .come. Hence the ethical ideal is pleasure in this life and that too of the individual

Since the main trend of Hindu thought: has been idealistic, the Carvaka system has contributed very little to the sum of Indian thought,(۱) and this is rather unfortunate. In view of the fact that the Vedas, the Upanisads, and the Gita reject the evidence of .the senses as illusory, the Carvaka contention might have served as a corrective

Jainism .۲

Jainism, according to Tomlin,(۲) is the most perplexing of all religions, for it is not only incredible but also impracticable. It denies life to the extent of recommending suicide as the most sacred act of which man is capable, and yet it has survived for two .thousand years

The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, was born in a Ksatriya family. His father was a wealthy person belonging to a religious sect which was opposed to the Vedas. This school of thought had materialistic tendencies and sceptical attitude very much akin .to that of Carvaka. But it was not a thoroughgoing materialism

It shared with the masses the horror of rebirth and advocated slow suicide through starvation as a remedy against transmigration. Mahavira's father got his wife converted to his viewpoint and in due course shared with her the martyrdom they .desired

Before following the example of his parents, Mahavira embarked upon a quest of

wisdom and adopted an ascetic life. After two years of

.Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, Allen Unwin, London, ۱۹۳۲, p. ۱۹۵ -۱

Tomlin, The Great Philosophies: The Eastern World, Skeffington, London, ۱۹۵۲, p. -۲ .۱۷۰

abstinence and self...denial he withdrew himself from civilized life and dispensed with all the amenities of life including those of clothing. During the first six years of his .peregrination, he observed frequent fasts of several months duration

He voluntarily exposed himself to be maltreated by the Mlechcha tribes of Vajrabhumi and Lat who abused and beat him, and shot arrows at him, and baited him with dogs, to all of which he offered no resistance. At the end of the ninth year, Mahavira .relinquished his silence, but continued the practice of self...mortification

The whole of the time spent by him in these preparatory exercises was twelve years .acid six months, and of this he fasted nearly eleven years

The Jains have a tradition that saviours are sent to the world whenever mankind is .plunged in corruption and sin. Mahavira was twenty...fourth in the line

Mahavira denied the divine origin and infallible authority of the Vedas. His religion is, therefore, reckoned as a heterodox religion. Its cosmology and anthropology is non...Aryan. While Brahmanism is the representative of Vedic Aryan thought and beliefs, Buddhism; Jainism, and a host of other doctrines relate themselves to the native genius and expose the pessimistic dualism which underlies so much of Indian .philosophy

Jainism is a philosophy of the profoundest pessimism. It visualizes the world as a round of endless rebirths, full of sufferings and entirely useless. One shall have to pass through periods of inconsequential pleasures and unbearable pains unless one obtains a release through austerities and

.self…abnegation

In the Jaina…Sutras, suicide is called “the incomparable religious death,” requiring in .some cases a whole life…time to cultivate a proper frame of mind for its performance

It is essential that all types of longings including those of death be completely eradicated from one's consciousness. Hence one has to bring about one's extinction in .a mood beyond both desire and aversion

As regards the philosophy of Jainism, it may be said that an eternal and presiding First Cause forms no part of this system, nor do the Jains admit of soul or spirit as distinct from the living principle. They do believe in the independent and eternal existence of spirit and matter, but by spirit they do not mean universal spirit as they have no faith .in the Supreme Soul

The spirits called jivas are eternal but limited and variable because of which they can adjust themselves to the size of the body they happen to inhabit. Their essence is knowledge which is not empirical or sensory. As a matter of fact, perception is a check upon the absolute sight of the soul. In order that the soul may regain its true nature, it .is necessary that limitations imposed by the senses be done away with

The Jains believe in both transmigration and karma. The latter operates by itself. Being a subtle particle of matter, it enters the soul and soils it. Hence no supreme .being in the form of God is required to allot rewards and punishments

Mahavira says, “The world

is without bounds like a formidable ocean; its cause is action (karma) which is as the seed of the tree. The being (jiva) invested with body, but devoid of judgment, goes like a well…sinker ever downwards by the acts it performs, whilst the disembodied being which has attained purity goes ever upwards by its own acts like the builder of a

palace."(١)

Ajiva, the second predicate of existence, comprises objects or properties devoid of consciousness and life. It is regarded as five…fold. Out of these, matter is atomic in the final analysis. It possesses the qualities of colour, taste, odour, and touch.

All the atoms are supposed to possess souls so that the whole universe seems to be pulsating with life. Time, another ajiva, is eternal. The world has neither an origin nor an end.

As already observed, the karmic particles are mingled with the life…monads. It is held that they communicate colours to them which may be white, yellow, flaming…red, dove…grey, dark…blue, or black. These colours are perceived by the Jaina Tirthankaras by virtue of their boundless intuition or omniscience.

Ordinarily, black is the characteristic colour of the cruel and the merciless, dark…blue that of the greedy and the sensual, dove…grey of the reckless and the hot…tempered, red of the prudent, yellow of the compassionate and the white of the dispassionate and the impartial.

In the ethics of Mahavira, social life has no place. It is perfect nonactivity in thought, speech, and deed that is recommended. One should be dead to

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١- Wilson, Essays and Lectures on the Religion of the Hindus, London, ۱۸۶۲, vol. I, p. ۲۹۷.

pain and enjoyment and also to all other interests including the intellectual, social, and political to achieve liberation from the bondage of physical existence. Cessation of activity is a stepping…stone to the superhuman sphere…a sphere which is not only above human beings but also beyond gods.

The doctrine of ahimsa which means renunciation of the will to kill and to damage is an article of faith with the Jains. In the Ayaramgasutta, a Jaina text, it is written, "All

saints and Lords . . . declare thus: One may not kill, nor ill-use, nor insult, nor torment, nor persecute any kind of living beings, any kind of creature, any kind of thing having a soul, any kind of beings."(1)

The Jains do not offer bloody sacrifices, do not eat meat, never hunt, and take care that they do not trample on creeping things and insects. The laying down of this commandment is a great thing in the spiritual history of mankind; but it has to be said that the principle is altogether impracticable. It has been assumed that non-killing and non-harming are possible of fulfilment in this world of ours.

Even on purely biological grounds, if on no others, it becomes necessary sometimes to kill as well as to damage both intentionally and unintentionally. "It is crueler to let domestic animals which one can no longer feed die a painful death by starvation than to give them a quick and painless end by violence. Again and again we see ourselves placed under

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۱- Winternitz, A History of Indian. Literature, Calcutta University, Calcutta ii, p. ۴۳۶.

the necessity of saving one living creature by destroying or damaging another."(1)

۳. Buddhism

As a prince, Buddha's name was Siddhartha and his family name Gautama; his father's name Suddhodana, and his mother's Maya. It is interesting to note that all these navies have meanings from which it is conjectured that Buddha might not have been a historical person. Suddhodana means "he whose food is pure," Maya means "an illusion," Siddhartha means "he by whom the end is accomplished," while Buddha signifies "he by whom all is known".

These meanings suggest an allegorical signification, very much in the style of the Pilgrim's Progress. The city of Buddha's birth, Kapilavastu, which has no place in the geography of the Hindus, lends weight to this supposition.

But, in spite of the allegorical interpretation as suggested by the etymology of the names, the historians are pretty well agreed in regarding Buddha as a historical person who lived six centuries before Christ and who was so much disturbed by the transience and miseries of the earthly existence that he renounced his power and .wealth and devoted himself to solitary meditation

He engaged himself in sacred study under different Brahmins, but dissatisfied with their teaching he retired into solitude. For six years he practised rigorous austerities. Finding their effect upon the body unfavourable to intellectual energy, he desisted from it and adopted a more genial course of life. At last knowledge dawned upon him, and he was in possession of the object of his search, which he communicated

p: ۶۲

۱- Schweitzer, op. cit p. ۸۴.

.to others

Buddha had no doubt that the mundane existence is replete with sorrows, afflictions, and tribulations. Not only this; he also believed that the misery of life is unending. All fulfilment of desires is attended by pain. The causes of pain, according to Buddha, are not economical, social, or political. They are rooted in the very nature of human life .because of the fact that like everything else it is ephemeral and transitory

Even souls are impermanent and our ignorance on this point is the major reason of our suffering. Everything is in a flux. We deceive ourselves into thinking that there is a permanent base for change. It is the Law of Causality which binds together the .continuous vibration and infinite growth which characterize this world

Buddha did not believe in any ontological reality which is permanent and which endures beneath the shifting appearances of the visible world. He also repudiated the Upanisadic view of a permanent Atman and held that search for a permanent soul .inside the body is in vain

Buddha supposed that the law of karma worked into our very nature and that there was no escape from it, the present and the future being the result of the past. Karma .is overcome through nirvana which puts an end to the cycle of births and deaths

Nirvana literally means blowing out; hence it suggests extinction. It is sometimes contended that nirvana is not a negative goal; it has a positive aspect as well. It is not simply

extinction but also a state of blessedness or perfection. It is a kind of existence, .devoid of egoity and full of peace, calm, and bliss

To achieve nirvana, Buddha recommended a path of self…discipline which is eight…fold: right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought, and right concentration. The emphasis is on right living which is different in the case of a layman and a monk. The first four are applicable to all, while the .remaining four are applicable especially to the priestly class

The practical part of Buddha's system has the same duality. Five negative injunctions, namely, not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to use strong drinks, are binding on all, while not to take repasts at improper times, not to witness dances and plays, not to have costly raiments and perfumes, not to have a large bed .or quilt, and not to receive gold or silver, are meant for priests only

Similarly, the virtues of charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation, and silence have to be cultivated by all, but there are twelve observances binding on recluses .only

They have to use clothes made of rags picked up from burning grounds, to have only three such suits all sewn by the wearer's own hand, to have a cloak of yellow wool prepared in the same manner, to live only on food given in charity, to take only one meal daily, never to eat or drink after

midday, to live in forests, to have no roof but the foliage of trees, to sit with the back supported by the trunk of a tree, to sleep sitting and not lying, never to change the position of the carpet when it has once been spread, and to go once a month to .burning grounds to meditate on the vanity of life on the earth

Thus, there is a complete distinction between the religion for the masses and the discipline for priesthood. The former is quite human while the latter is cold…hearted and unnatural. Ultimate release from transmigration can be attained, in the opinion of Buddha, only after one becomes a monk. The religion of the masses is good for human relationship, but not for the liberation of the soul from the cycle of births and .deaths

For Buddha a Brahmin is one who cares not for others, who has no relations, who controls himself, who is firmly fixed in the heart of truth, in whom the fundamental evils are extinguished, and who has thrown hatred away from him. No doubt, one finds here an emphasis on the cultivation of ethical virtues but renunciation and condemnation of worldly ties are also evident. Buddha wants men to be occupied with .their own redemption and not with that of their fellow…beings

Buddha attaches no importance to such knowledge as entangles a man in the net of life. There are no doubt practical and theoretical systems of knowledge which enable people to acquire skills and

crafts, but ultimately they have no value. Says Buddha, "Such knowledge and opinions, if thoroughly mastered, will lead inevitably to certain ends and produce .certain results in one's life

The enlightened one is aware of all these consequences and also of what lies behind them. But he does not attach much importance to this knowledge. For within himself he fosters another knowledge, the knowledge of cessation, of the discontinuance of .worldly existence, of utter repose by emancipation

He has perfect insight into the manner of the springing into existence of our sensations and feelings and their vanishing again with all their sweetness and bitterness, into the way of escape from them altogether, and into the manner in which by non…attachment to them through right knowledge of their character he has himself (won the release."(١)

The Philosophical Schools of Buddhism

Religiously, Buddhism is divided into two great schools, the orthodox, known as the Hinayana, and the progressive, known as the Mahayana. The former, representing Buddhism, faithfully believes in the relentless working of the law of karma and refuses to assign any place to God in the scheme of things. The individual has to win his libera… tion through his own efforts by treading the path of rightness as delineated by .Buddha

The responsibility of achieving salvation falls squarely on the shoulders of the individual. Before Buddha breathed his last, he advised his followers to work out their salvation with diligence. Philosophically, the Hinayana Buddhism advocates pure phenomenalism, maintaining the non…existence of substances or individuals. What exists is

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١- Digha Nikaya

.merely passing entities, there being feelings but no feeler, thoughts but no thinker

The Hinayana school could not satisfy the masses because of its abstract, dry, and arid approach to the problems of life and also because of its denial of God. Its ethics smacked of egoism, since the Hinayana Buddhist was exclusively concerned with his own emancipation, having nothing to do with the moral needs of others. The Mahayana school sought to rectify these mistakes by taking a more realistic view of .religion

Instead of the ideal of personal liberation it recommended the "liberation of all sentient beings" as the summun bonum of human life. It also rehabilitated God, by identifying Buddha with a transcendental reality behind the world of phenomena, Gautama being an incarnation of the Buddha.

The Hinayana school denied reality to the Self: but the Mahayana school resuscitated the Self too, by holding that it was the little individual self that was false and not the Self of all beings, the one transcendental Self (Mahatman).

Though Buddha had abhorrence for metaphysical jargon, his religion being an ethical system with no supernaturalism yet his followers failed to keep themselves away from ontological and epistemological questions of abstruse nature. Consequently, there emerged four schools, two under the Hinayana and two under the Alahavana sect, on the basis of their metaphysical predilections.

۱. The Madhyamika School of Sunyavada – According to this school, everything is void and the universe is totally devoid of reality. In support of their contention they argue

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that the knower, the known, and knowledge are interdependent and if any one in the series is proved false it will entail the falsity of the other two.

It is maintained by the proponents of this theory that cases of illusion demonstrate the falsity of knowledge; consequently, the truth of the other two factors in this epistemological trinity cannot be guaranteed.

۲. The Yogacara School of Subjective Idealism … This school was one with the Madhyamika in dismissing all external reality as illusion, but could not see eye to eye with it in respect of mind. It was urged that if mind was pronounced unreal along with matter, then all reasoning and thinking would be false. It would be as impossible to establish your own position as to demolish the position of your adversary, once mind is dismissed as maya.

To this school, mind is the only reality; the external objects exist simply as ideas. No

object can be known without consciousness of it; hence the objects cannot be proved .to have an existence independent of consciousness

The Sautrantika School of Representationism … This school believes in the existence .۳ of mind and also of the external world. The Sautrantikas maintain that illusions cannot be explained in the absence of external objects. Moreover the objects do not exist as .ideas; rather our ideas are copies of objects which exist by their own nature

The Vaibhasika School … This school recognizes the reality of mind as well as of .۴ matter and further holds

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like the neo…realists of the West that unless the object is perceived, there is no means of certifying that the so…called copy is a faithful representation of the original. The only plausible position in that case would be subjective idealism of the Yogacara School; and if for some reason the theory of subjective idealism is untenable, then it .should be conceded that objects are capable of being perceived directly

Systems of Indian Philosophy

There are six systems which are recognized as orthodox. Each is called a darsana or a view because it embodies a way of looking at the world. They are generally treated together, in pairs. The first pair includes the Nyaya or the school of Logic founded by .Gautama and the Atomic school founded by Kanada

There are, however, reasons to believe that the two systems were organized into one in the fourth/tenth century long after the Muslims had settled down in India and had made their mark on Indian thought and culture. The analysis of the ideas .incorporated into the systems after their unification will amply bear this out

Accordingly, these two systems will receive separate treatment after the other systems. The remaining four systems were organized into two pairs before the .advent of the Muslims and will be discussed together

While discussing these systems we shall have to ignore such thinkers as were born after the second/eighth century and whose contributions show unmistakable signs of Muslim influence. Their thinking is not purely Indian; it is at least not on conservative .lines

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There are radical departures both in the understanding of problems and their solutions, and these departures can be accounted for on no other hypothesis than the .impact of Muslim thought on the Indian mind

The first pair to be mentioned will include the Sankhya or Numeral system said to be founded by Kapila and the Yoga or the Mystic system founded by Patanjali; the second pair will include the Purva…Mimamsa, the original decider, founded by Jaimini, .and the Uttara…Mimamsa, the second decider, said to be founded by Vyasa

The authors of the various schools as given above are generally accepted by the Hindus as real, but there is a great deal of doubt about their authenticity. Rene :Guenon writing about Gautama, the author of Nyaya, says

This name should not be taken as referring to any single individual and it is not" accompanied in this case by any biographical details of the vaguest kind . . . the name denotes what is really an `intellectual aggregate' made up of all those who over a period . . . devoted themselves to one and the same study …. The same could be said of the proper names that we find associated in a similar way with each of the other (darsanas."(۱

Sankhya and Yoga … These two systems are the outer and the inner aspects of a .۲ ۱ single discipline. In the Bhagavad…Gita there is written, "Puerile and unlearned people speak of `enumerating knowledge' (Sankhya) and the `practice of introvert

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.Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines, Luzac, London, ۱۹۴۵ pp.۲۳۹…۴۰ -۱

concentration' (Yoga) as distinct from each other, yet anyone firmly established in either gains the fruit of both.

The state attained by the followers of the path of enumerating knowledge is attained also through the exercises of introvert concentration. He truly sees who regards as one the intellectual attitude of enumerating knowledge and the practice of concen-tration."(۱) Sankhya is a theoretical system describing the elements of human nature, its bondage and release, while Yoga is a practical discipline to gain the same end through the practice of yogic exercises.

According to Zimmer, "The main conceptions of this dual system are (i) that the universe is founded on an irresoluble, dichotomy of `life-monads' (purusa) and lifeless matter (prakrti), (ii) that `matter,' though fundamentally simple and uncompounded, nevertheless exfoliates, or manifests itself, under three distinctly differentiated aspects (the so-called gunas) which are comparable to the three strands of a rope, and (iii) that each one of the `life-monads' (purusa) associated with matter is involved in the bondage of an endless `round of transmigration' (samsara)."(۲)

Prakrti is a primal entity, out of which the physical universe with all its infinite diversity has evolved. It is all-pervasive and complex. Its complexity is due to the fact that it is constituted of three gunas, namely, sattya, rajas, and tamas, which, though different, nevertheless work harmoniously to produce an ordered world. Sattya means what is pure, rajas signifies what is active, while tamas stands for what offers resistance.

These three gunas are present in every object

۱- Gita, ۵: ۴-۵.

۲- Zimmer, op. cit., p. ۲۸۱.

since the effect cannot be other than its material cause. This doctrine, according to which nothing new can originate and the effects should be entirely determined. By

their antecedent factors, goes by the name of “the doctrine of pre…existent effect.” The gunas do not combine in the same ratio in every object and that accounts for the .multiplicity and the infinite diversity of things

The first thing to evolve from the prakrti was the intellect, which in turn produced egoism or individuality. From the sattya aspect of egoism there preceded five .sense…organs, while from the tamers aspect there emerged five motor organs

Thus, the first to emerge in the course of evolution were those objects which parusa needed. Out of the simple and subtle elements arose gross elements, e.g., space emerged from elemental sound, air from space and elemental tough, fire from these .two and elemental colour, so on and so forth

So far we have naturalism in its most aggressive form, but it is diluted by its recognition of purusa alongside prakrti as an equally important principle in the constitution of the world. Purusa is manifold and simple in contradistinction to prakrti which is single and complex. How can two principles of contradictory attributes come .to work together, is a difficult point in this theory

Purusa is often defined as a pure spirit by virtue of the fact that it is non matter, and yet it has no spirituality about itself. It can be defined only negatively: it is without attributes, without

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motion “imperishable, inactive, and impassive.” After a person acquires full knowledge of the purusa, he becomes indifferent to both the subtle and the gross elements of his .material existence

When death comes finally, the subtle and the gross elements dissolve, but the purusa continues to exist having now been released once for all from the clutches of the .gunas. This is “final aloofness,” or isolation, the summum bonum of yogic practices

Yoga consists in the (intentional) stoppage of the spontaneous activities of the“ life…staff.”(۱) As the mind is in constant commotion, it assumes the shapes of the

objects it cognizes. In order to understand its true nature all impulses from within and .without have to be stopped

The life...monad is so to say in the bondage of life and consciousness; it has to reveal all the processes of the subtle and gross body. In its own nature it is propertyless, .without beginning and end, infinite, and all...pervading

The only problem with man is to realize his actual freedom by separating the life...monad from all distraction and turbulent conditions. To achieve this objective the Sankhya...Yoga philosophy prescribes the suppression of right notions arising from correct perceptions, and wrong notions due to misapprehensions, fantasy, sleep, and .memory

When this is accomplished, the mind is stilled. The goal is isolation which becomes .possible when the purity of contemplation equals the purity of the life...monad

This is explained by a commentator of Patanjali in the words, "When the contemplative power (sattya) of the thinking substance

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.Pantanjali. Yoga-Sutras, I. ۱-۲ -۱

is freed from the defilement of the active power (rajas) and the force of inertia (tamas) and has no further task than that involved in transcending the presented idea of difference between itself (sattya) and the life...monad (purusa) and when the interior seeds of hindrances (klesa) have all been burnt, then the contemplative .power (sattya) enters into a state of purity equal to that of the life...monad

This purity is neither more nor less than the cessation of the false attribution of experience to the life...monad. That is the life...monad's isolation. Then the purusa (having its light within itself becomes undefiled and isolated."(۱

According to the Yoga philosophy, hindrances to the manifestation of the true nature of the purusa are ignorance; I am I, attachment or sympathy, repugnance or hatred,

and the will to live. Moreover, the interplay of the gunas is a source of confusion. All these can be eradicated through asceticism, learning, and devotion, or complete .surrender to the will of God

Asceticism rids a yogi of passions and spiritual inertia; recitation of holy prayers initiates him in the art of religious detachment; while complete surrender to the will of God develops him spiritually, by making him regard God as the real cause of his achievements. Through this programme, the klesa, i. e., hindrances and impediments, are reduced to nothingness, the rajas and tamas are destroyed, and sattya alone .remains to recognize the life…monad in its pristine glory

The yogic exercises of starving and torturing the body

.Zimmer. op. cit., p. ۲۹۳ -۱

are calculated to eradicate not only the conscious but also the unconscious tendencies of our biological existence and so to attune the personality to a .supersensible type of experience

Through meditation and self…torturing practices one reaches knowledge of the Truth, “Neither I am, nor is aught mine, nor do I exist.” Having gained this knowledge the purusa in peace and inaction contemplates nature which is of no interest to him, and .at death attains its true life of isolation

Mimamsa…Purva and Uttara … The object of the Purva-Mimasa, also called the .۴ ۳ Karama…Mimamsa, i.e, Action…Investigation, is to reach certainty on the subject of dharma or the religious duty of the Hindus, chiefly about the sacrifices and the methods of offering them. In course of time there came into vogue variant opinions .and customs for the performance of every kind of ceremony

The Brahmins had laid down very detailed instructions with regard to sacrificial duties but alongside them there had emerged local and family customs and conventions.

These two were often hard to reconcile. Hence the problem was to bring the Brahmanic instructions intro harmony with one another and also with the existing family and local customs. A further problem was to discover in these customs a .meaning that should satisfy every new generation

The Purva…Mimamsa consists of twelve books, all full of positive and negative injunctions about principal and subordinate rites concerning sacrifices. A cursory perusal of the Mimamsa clearly shows that the work is principally concerned with the interpretation of

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those Vedic texts as are required for sacrificial purposes and that it raises only .incidentally, if at all, genuine metaphysical questions

It does raise the question of the absolute authority of the Vedas together with the doctrine of their eternity, and discusses in this connection the problem of the eternity .of sound and the relation between the sound of a word and its meaning

The Purva…Mimamsa is not a treatise on philosophy. Nevertheless, certain metaphysical ideas are implied, or find incidental expression in it. A charge of atheism is often brought against this system. The advocates of the Purva Mimamsa say, “There is no God, or Maker of the world; nor has the world any sustainer or destroyer, .for every man obtains a recompense in conformity with his own work

Nor indeed is there any maker of the Vedas, for their words are eternal. Their authoritativeness is self…demonstrated; since it has been established from all “ “ (eternity, how can it be dependent upon anything but itself?(۱

But in Max Muller's view this charge is based upon a misconception. The system does not attribute the fruit of sacrificial acts to any divine agency, nor does it make God .responsible for the injustice that seems to prevail in the world

Further, it gives evidence of a firm faith in the operation of the law of cause and effect and, consequently, ascribes the inequalities of the world to the working of good and

.bad deeds. But all this would not make the system atheistic

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.Ibid., p. ۲۷۸ -۱

It simply proves that the Mimamsa has an unorthodox conception of God. Max Muller's contention seems to conflict with the Mimamsa itself, for the latter says, (“Wherefore God? The world itself suffices for itself.”(۱

Uttara_Mimamsa or Vedanta … the term Vedanta literally means the end of the Vedas or the doctrines set forth in the closing chapters of the Vedas which are the Upanisads. The Uttara_Mimamsa or Later Investigations as against Purva_Mimamsa .which are Prior Investigations is usually called Vedanta_sutras or Brahma_sutras

The latter name is given to indicate that Brahman is the spirit embodied in the universe. The work is attributed to Badarayana, but in reality many writers of different times appear to have made their contributions towards its compilation. In five hundred and five sutras which consist mostly of two or three words each, the whole system is developed. The sutras are, however, unintelligible by themselves and .leave everything to the interpreters

The Vedanta_sutras discuss the whole theory of the Brahman in four chapters. The first chapter deals with the nature of the Brahman and his relation to the world and the individual souls; the second is polemical; the third deals with the ways and means of attaining Brahman_vidya; and the fourth treats of the fruit of Brahman_vidya and .after_life

Badarayana believes both in the eternity and infallibility of the Vedas. He recognizes two sources of knowledge: sruti and smrti or perception and inference, and maintains that sruti is the basis for smrti. Similarly, he draws a hard and

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.Hiriyanna, op. cit., p. ۱۳۵ -۱

.fast line between two realms: one amenable to reason and the other lying beyond it

The area where reason is competent is that of prakrti together with its manifestations, while the realm of Brahman lies beyond the reach of discursive reasoning. Reason can flourish among properties, relations, and characteristics, while Brahman is devoid of all these things and, therefore, cannot be reached through .inferential knowledge

The only way to reach the Brahman is to cultivate intuition through meditation and devotion. It will reveal that the Brahman is the basis of reality: the material as well as the final cause of the universe. In creating the world God had no purpose to fulfil; what seems to be His activity is nothing but sport. God is omniscient, formless, and one, in whom the prakrti and the purusaof the Sankhya system combine, both being .manifestations or modes of the same Ultimate Reality

After creating the elements, Brahman entered into them and determined the characteristic manner of their development and production of other things. The Brahman, as it were, transforms Himself into everything that is caused by Him since cause and effect must have similar natures. Two illustrations are given to prove the identity of cause and effect; one is drawn from an inanimate object and the other from an animate object. It is said that when a piece of cloth is rolled up its real nature .remains hidden, but when it is spread out it can be known truly

Likewise a person is paralyzed

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if his breath is held but becomes active the moment his breath is released. In both these cases the qualities of the antecedent are different from those of the consequent although the object is the same, which shows that despite differences the cause and the effect remain identical. Brahman and the world are not disparate in .spite of differences

The wooden table is not different from the wood in its essential nature; similarly,

.Brahman is not different from the multiform objects of the universe

The world is a sport or lila of the Brahman, which means that it is without purpose and without significance. It is hard to assign any meaning to the universe, since Vedantism declares, “Brahman is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahman and nothing else.” And again, “There is nothing worth gaining there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing but Brahma alone, for he who knows Brahman is Brahman.”(۱)

In calling the world a sport there is however no implication that God created sufferings for mankind to take pleasure out of them. This would be a very uncharitable view and altogether cynical. Sufferings, woes, and ills of men as well as of other objects, both animate and inanimate, are the result of their own karma … a law of moral causation which works inexorably and leaves no scope for the interference of divine or non…divine agencies. Likewise all evils and sins are due to .karma; they are not caused by Brahman

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۱- .Max Muller op. cit., p. ۱۶۰

self is concealed within five sheaths, that is to say, five superimposed psycho…somatic layers which should be torn away through ethical discipline and self…denial. Avidya (nescience) is lack of insight into the nature of reality and is a major hindrance in the path of moksa or release. It is an article of faith with Vedantism that liberation can be .obtained through knowledge

Since the Self is with us, though concealed and hidden behind five sheaths, when true knowledge is gained it will be seen that one realizes one's own true nature. This realization can be effected through yogic practices, critical thought, or any other orthodox way. Ethical discipline is also directed to the same end. Its object is to cleanse the soul through rigorous self…discipline and impeccable conduct, in a spirit of .non…attachment

The highest knowledge is Brahman...vidya or vision of God which is attained through the realization of the Self. After an individual soul has reached Brahman there is no return for the liberated soul. This goal is expressed through the oft...quoted verse from the Upanisads; "He who realizes Brahman through knowing becomes Brahman."(۱)

۵. The Nyaya System ... As already observed, because of the singular absence or deficiency of historical data, little is known of Gautama, the author of Nyaya. He is as much a subject of fanciful legend as Kapila, the author of the Sankhya system.

The word nyaya means "propriety" or "fitness." The system undertakes to declare the method of arriving at that knowledge of truth the fruit of

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۱- ۳. ۲. ۹ ,Mundaka...Upanisad.

which, it promises, is the chief end of man. The name is also used in a more limited application to denominate the proper method of setting forth an argument.

This has led to the practice of calling the Nyaya the Hindu logic, which by the way does not adequately describe the scope of the system. According to the author of the system, "Supreme felicity is attained through knowledge about the true nature of the sixteen categories (Padarthas)."(۱)

The first work of the Nyaya system consists of sixty aphorisms, and the first sutra gives a list of the subjects to be discussed. These are sixteen in number:

(۱) pramana or the means by which right knowledge may be gained; (۲) prameya or the object of thought; (۳) doubt; (۴) motive; (۵) instance or example; (۶) dogma or determinate truth; (۷) argument or syllogism; (۸) confutation; (۹) ascertainment; (۱۰) controversy; (۱۱) jangling; (۱۲) objection or cavilling; (۱۳) fallacy; (۱۴) perversion, (۱۵) futility; (۱۶) conclusion or the confounding of an adversary.

Of the sixteen categories the first two are important; others are only subsidiary indicating the course which a discussion may take from the start to the finish, i.e.,

.from the enunciation of the doubt to the confounding of the doubter

The first category by the name of pramana signifies proof or evidence, and denotes the legitimate means of knowledge within the rational order. It enumerates four kinds of proofs, namely, perception by the senses (pratyaksa); inference (anumana) ; comparison (upamana) ; and verbal

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Nyaya…Sutra, Book I, Chapter IV, Sutra I -۱

authority (sabda)including revelation and tradition. Inference, it says, is of three kinds: .from cause to effect, from effect to cause, and by analogy

The argument which is also called nyaya consists of five constituent members. These are: (۱) the proposition to be proved (pratijnia), (۲) the reason justifying this proposition (hetu), (۳) the example cited in support of the reason (udahrana), (۴) the application of the first proposition to the particular case in question (upanaya), and (۵) the result (nigamana), which is a statement of the fact that the proposition has been .proved

:A typical Indian syllogism would be as follows

۱. Yonder mountain has fire.

۲. For it has smoke.

۳. Whatever has smoke has fire.

۴. Yonder mountain has smoke such as is invariably accompanied by fire.

۵. Therefore, yonder mountain has fire.

The linguistic form is not considered necessary to syllogism. This is common to all .forms of Indian logic

According to the Nyaya, a notion or a concept can be either right or wrong. In the first case it is obtained through perception or inference or comparison or revelation. A wrong notion is one which is not derived from proof and originates either from doubt or from false premises or from error. A wise man avoids these as well as passions and .aversions and is profoundly indifferent to all action

Blessedness is deliverance from pain. The primary evil is pain. There are twenty_one varieties of evil which spring from the organs of sense, from the objects of sense, from mental apprehensions, and even from pleasure. "The

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soul attains to this deliverance by knowledge, by meditation on itself, by not earning fresh merit or demerit through actions sprung from desire, and by becoming free from passions through knowledge of the evil inherent in objects. It is knowledge . . . (and not virtue which obtains final deliverance from the body."(۱

The Nyaya is predominantly intellectual and analytical. Its value lies in its methodology or the theory of knowledge on which it builds its philosophy. This theory it applies not only to one system but to all systems with modifications here and there. Chatterjee and Datta observe that "the Nyaya theory of pluralistic realism is not so satisfying as its logic. Here we have a common sense view of the world as a system of independent realities .... It does not give us a systematic philosophy of the world in the (light of one universal absolute principle.(۲

The Indian syllogism bears a close resemblance to Aristotelian syllogism especially when it is simplified or abridged, consisting either of the last three or the first three terms only. It is, therefore, suggested by a good many historians that either Aristotle or the builders of the Nyaya system drew inspiration from the other. It is also possible .that the obligation is mutual

The Vaisesika System _ Vaisesika is derived from visesa which means difference, .۶ signifying thereby that multiplicity and not unity lies at the basis of the universe. It is expounded by Kanada in the Vaisesika_Sutra which contains about

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.John Davies, Hindu Philosophy, Kegan Paul, London. ١٨٨۴, p. ١٢۴ -١

An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, Calcutta University, Calcutta, ١٩۴۴, p. ٢۴٧ -٢

five hundred and fifty aphorisms. Book ١ discusses the five categories…substance, quality, action, community or genus, and particularity; Book ٢ deals with the .substances earth, water, air, ether, space, and time

Book ٣ is concerned with the problems of mind and self and also touches the theory of inference; Book ۴ is about the atomic theory and discusses the nature of body and the visibility of quality; Book ۵ deals with motion; Book ۶ contains duties of the four stages of life; Book ٧ treats of quality, the atomic theory, the self, and inherence together; Books ٨ and ٩ deal with perception and inference; while Book ١٠ is concerned with .causality and other related questions

A fundamental assumption of this system is that objects are independent of the perceiving mind and also of one another. Philosophically, the doctrine may be called pluralistic realism. The entire world of experience can be divided into nine dravya or substances together with their properties and relations: These substances are earth, .water, fire, air, akasa, time, space, self, and manas

Besides substances which simply provide a framework for the whole universe there are padartha, or categories, seven in number, namely, guna, karma, visesa, samavaya, samanya, abhava, and dravya, which can be translated as quality, action, .individuality, necessary relation, universals, negation, and substance

Qualities depend upon substances, but they can be independently conceived and so exist by their own nature. No distinction is recognized between mental and material qualities or between the primary and secondary qualities. Quite consistent with

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its pluralistic standpoint, the doctrine holds that the substances reveal their nature

.through the qualities in which they differ and not in which they agree

In regarding earth, air, water, and fire as substances, what is implied is that the entire structure of the universe can be interpreted in terms of material causes which are supersensible. The ultimate stuff of which this universe is made is the mass of atoms that are round, extremely minute, invisible, incapable of division, eternal in .themselves but not in their aggregate form

Even mind (manas) is regarded as an atom extremely small, because of which only .one sensation can be conveyed to the soul at one time

Vaisesika is basically a dualistic philosophy inasmuch as it recognizes the eternality both of atoms and souls. In fact every Hindu system regards matter as eternal. The only exception is the school of the Vedantists which takes matter as the illusive .manifestation of the one Supreme Brahman who is Himself the all

According to Kanada, the summum bonum for man is nothing but deliverance from pain, which can be achieved through knowledge, resulting in the soul getting into a .state of a tranquil, unconscious passivity

The Influence of Islam on Hinduism

From the account of the six systems of Indian philosophy given above, such writers as were born after the advent of Islam in India have been excluded; not that they were in any way less important than those who saw the light of the day before the first /seventh century, but because their thinking shows unmistakable

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.signs, implicit as well as explicit, of Muslim impact

Details of this impact have been provided in a separate chapter of this volume. Here it will suffice to say that the impact was very deep, firm, and abiding, and left no aspect .of Indian thought untouched

The contact of the Muslims with the Indians began as early as the end of the

first/seventh century, and still continues to the advantage of both. Islam was introduced into the Indian sub…continent by Arab traders; it was propagated by mystics and saints; and it was established by Muslim rulers of various dynasties who .made India their home like several other Muslim immigrants

The Muslims brought with them their ideology, their philosophy and religion, their beliefs and practices, and, above all, an unconquerable passion to share this wisdom with others. The Sufis who were thinkers of no mean order succeeded by their example and precept in imparting to the natives that ideology and philosophy which the Muslims had expounded from their understanding of the Qur'an, the hadith, and .the Sunnah

Muhammad bin Qasim is ranked as the first Muslim who entered India as a conqueror in ۹۴/۷۱۲. His example was followed by a long line of Muslim rulers who wielded the sceptre of authority over the Indian sub…continent till ۱۲۷۴/۱۸۵۷, when Indian "mutiny" took place and the Britishers found a splendid excuse to wipe off the last vestige of .the Muslim Empire

During a period of one thousand years when the Indian sub…continent lay prostrate at the

feet of the Muslim emperors, many of whom enjoyed full autocratic powers, it is very unlikely that the culture and philosophy which they cherished and treasured should .have left no imprint on the thoughts and beliefs of the native population

There was, however, no imposition of one culture over another. Culture can never be introduced by the sword, no matter how long and sharp. What happened on the Indian soil was not the replacement of one culture by another but an amalgamation of the two. It was a case of the willing acceptance of the salient features of Muslim .culture and making them a part and parcel of the culture of India

What Sankara and Ramanuja did in the sphere of philosophy was done by others in

the fields of religion; ethics, and social polity. The result was a great upheaval in the world of Hindu thought. A re…evaluation and a re…appraisal of old values and thoughts .took place on a gigantic scale

Monotheism was stressed and so was universal brotherhood of mankind and a positive approach to life. Casteless society became the goal of social reforms and the Sudras, the accursed and the condemned, were accorded the right to live like others. .All this was the product of the impact of Islam on Hinduism

There is evidence to show that the Nyaya and the Vaiseska were organized into one system after Islam had firmly entrenched itself in India. Not only were the two systems welded into one, they also became monotheistic

and advanced for the first time in the history of Hindu thought what are known as the .Hindu proofs for the existence of God

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Chapter ۲: Pre–Islamic Chinese Thought

point

Pre-Islamic Chinese Thought by Howard F. Didsbury, Jr., M.A., Ph.D., Associate Professor of History, Newark State College, Union, New Jersey and Adjunct Professor (at the American University, Washington D.C (U.S.A

In the present chapter we shall attempt to survey some of the salient features of Chinese philosophy avoiding any specialized or detailed discussion of the individual schools or of the philosophical technicalities involved. Our purpose is to present, in brief compass, an account of Chinese philosophical thought indicating a number of its peculiar characteristics and its apparent major limitations. This, then, will be a

summary of the outstanding peculiarities of Chinese philosophy prior to the arrival of .any significant foreign influence

First, a few words with respect to the period of Chinese philosophy we are covering, that of the Chou Dynasty (۱۱۲۲ ـ۲۵۶ B.C.). The last centuries of the Chou were marked by political and social turmoil associated with the disintegration of feudalism. The Chinese world was torn by internecine warfare, old political powers were overturned .and old values challenged or discarded

During this "time of troubles," to use Toynbee's term China produced a great variety of original schools of philosophical thought, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism as well as a Chinese version

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.of Epicureanism, the so_called Logicians, and the Yin Yang school

Because of the creative freshness and richness of the later Chou, it may be regarded as the classical period of Chinese philosophy. Our discussion is, perforce limited to these classical philosophies and their spirit; Chinese medieval and modern philo_ .sophies are not delineated, nor are Buddhism in China, nor Chinese Buddhism

The primary reason for this concentration on the Chou philosophies is that they represent the indigenous Chinese schools of philosophy before they were affected by the advent of other philosophical or religious idea, for example, Buddhism and its .attendant Indian metaphysics

Moreover, though some of these schools did not exercise a lasting influence on subsequent Chinese intellectual life, as was the case with Legalism which passed into oblivion with the collapse of the shortlived Ch'in Dynasty (۲۲۱ـ۲۰۷ B.C.), and with Mohism which died out a few centuries after the death of Mo Tzu, its founder, other schools, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and elements of the Yin Yang school, .persisted throughout the history of Chinese philosophy

Confucianism, though eclipsed at times, slowly gained a predominant position and

.became a powerful force in the moulding and direction of Chinese civilization

While these latter schools survived, the others passed into insignificance. For instance, the school of the Logicians never exercised any great influence on the .development of later Chinese philosophy

Also, Yang Chu's thought, somewhat similar to the philosophy of Epicurus, was never a threat to the other schools since it consisted more

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of an attitude toward life than a philosophy of existence. It was too individualistic, too .self_centred for wide acceptance by the Chinese

To appreciate adequately the peculiar features of Chinese philosophical thought, it is important that one be cognizant of certain facts of Chinese geography, economics, and sociology with regard to its emergence and development. The distinguished contemporary Chinese philosopher and historian of Chinese philosophy, Fung Yu_lan, (discusses all three topics at considerable length.(١

From the earliest times the Chinese considered the world and their land, t'ien hsia (all under heaven), to be one and the same. Because of its unique geographical position_a vast continental land mass bounded by a great mountain range, desert, and the ocean_the early culture of China appears to have developed in comparative isolation .from that of other great centres of civilization

At any rate, it seems fairly certain that the Chinese thinkers of the later Chou were not in a position comparable to that of their Greek philosophical contemporaries vis a vis the intellectual, philosophical, religious, and scientific thought of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations In developing their philosophies, the Greeks were .undoubtedly stimulated by other highly civilized peoples

An ancient Greek historian once noted that the Greeks were children compared to the Egyptians. In contrast, in the development of ancient Chinese philosophical thought, there does not seem to have been any significant cross_fertilization from other

.centres of civilization outside the Chou world

The Greeks and the Chinese differed considerably in their respective economic conditions. The Greeks

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Derk Bodde, Ed., A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, The Macmillan Company, -۱ .New York, ۱۹۴۸, Chap. ۲

were a commercial people to a great extent and were, therefore, brought into contact with a wide variety of ideas, customs, lands and peoples. Their conception of the world recognized the existence of other great civilizations. The Chinese, however, were mainly an agricultural people. None of the Chinese philosophers ventured .beyond Chou China

There was, in consequence, a definite insularity attached to Chinese philosophical thought. In addition to this insularity of thought, there was close affinity between the Chinese thinker and the Chinese peasant; both were attached to the land. The Chinese scholar_philosopher was usually a landowner, while the peasant cultivated the land. "Hence, throughout Chinese history, social and economic thinking and policy (have centred around the utilization and distribution of land."(۱)

In a sense, ancient Chinese philosophy may be said to have had an intimate association with, if not absolutely conditioned by, the peasant mentality. The Chinese thinkers' "reactions to the universe and their outlook on life were essentially those of the farmer."(۲) With the aid of their learning and genius, the Chinese sages were able "to express what an actual farmer felt but was incapable of expressing himself."(۳) Realization of this fact may go long way towards explaining the predominantly practical tone of Chinese philosophical thought. The peculiar problems connected with .Chinese economic life tended to limit the spectrum of values in philosophy

Though Confucianism and Taoism are "poles apart from one another, yet they are also the two poles of one and the same axis. They both

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.Ibid., p. ۱۷ -۱

.Ibid., p. ۱۸ -۲

.Ibid -۳

express, in one way or another, the aspirations and inspirations of the farmer."(۱) Confucianism stressed family obligations, while Taoism emphasized the power, .beauty, and mystery of nature

Just as geographical conditions and agricultural life have exerted an influence on the formation and character of Chinese philosophy, so also has done the Chinese social system, particularly the family. A striking feature of Chinese philosophical thought is its preoccupation with problems relating to the ethics of the family and the Chinese .social system

The most outstanding example of this preoccupation is to be found in Confucianism. "A great deal of Confucianism," Fung Yu...lan asserts, "is the rational justification or (theoretical expression of this social system."(۲

The mental outlook of the Chinese farmer as well as his values tended to limit the range of philosophical speculation. "The way of life of the farmers is to follow nature. They admire nature and condemn the artificial, and in their primitivity and innocence, they are easily made content. They desire no change, nor can they conceive of any (change."(۳

Here one may discern the source of strength of much of Chinese classical philosophy as well as its weakness. It reflected the attitudes, interests, prejudices, and values of .the Chinese peasant

A study of classical Chinese philosophy discloses that it possesses at least four highly distinctive features which may be a reflection of the dominance of this peasant mentality: lack of metaphysics, dearth of logical sophistication, preoccupation with .ethics, and a regressive theory of history

We shall comment on the

.Ibid., p. ۱۹ -۱

.Ibid., p. ۲۱ -۲

.Ibid., p. ۲۶ -۳

last feature first. The traditional Chinese theory of history is regressive. According to the Chinese, the Golden Age of mankind was in the dim remoteness of the past and all .subsequent history has been a tragic degeneration from the ancient ideal age

The Chinese sages sought to find the proper path which would enable mankind to recapture the peace, justice, and harmony of that Golden Age. Associated with this regressive conception of history was the tendency of many of the classical schools to .antedate the founder of a rival school of thought

Apparently, in order to make a school or a point of view more attractive and authoritative, it was felt necessary to increase its antiquity. The Confucianists, for example, referred to the mythological rulers, Yao and Shun; the Mohists, in support of their philosophical position, went back beyond Yao and Shun to the legendary Yu; and the Taoists, for their part, went beyond Yu to the mythical Yellow Emperor. The more .ancient the beginning of a school, the more was it to be trusted

The classical Chinese philosophers, for the most part, manifested an aversion to metaphysical speculation. The Confucianists, Confucius (۵۵۱…۴۷۹ B.C.), Mencius (۳۷۱…۲۸۹ B.C.), and Hsun Tzu (۲۹۸…c. ۲۳۸ B.C.), showed little interest in or even awareness of metaphysical questions. Confucius was not concerned with understanding the character of Ultimate Reality nor with epistemological problems; his concern was with social and political philosophy. Mencius lacks an interest in metaphysics as such, as .does Hsun Tzu

At the risk

of over…simplification, one could say that Confucianism was primarily an educational philosophy. Though Confucius was silent on whether or not human nature was good or evil, and, though Mencius and Hsun Tzu differ greatly on this point…the former maintaining that human nature is good, and the latter, that it is evil…all three agree on the need and efficacy of education for inculcating or developing ethical conduct. .Subtle metaphysical disquisitions are lacking in all three

Taoism, as set forth in the Tao Te Chingand the works of Chuang Tzu (۳۹۹…c. ۲۹۵ B.C.), frequently approaches a metaphysical analysis of reality, but, more characteristically, ends in a hazy mysticism or appears to be fascinated with the enunciation of paradoxes. The Taoist saying that he who knows cannot say and that he who says does not know the Tao (the Way, or Ultimate Reality) is not particularly conducive to .metaphysical discourse

Mo Tzu (c. ۴۷۹…c. ۴۳۸ B.C.), founder of Mohism, does not show any interest in metaphysical matters as such. His philosophy stressed an "all-embracing love" based upon utility. He condemned aggressive war and urged altruism based upon mutual self…interest because the results were more pleasant and useful to society. His .reasons were practical and devoid of any metaphysical justification

As for the Logicians, for example, Hui Shih (c. ۳۸۰…۳۰۵ B. C.) and Kung…sun Lung (۳۸۰…۲۵۰ B.C.?), their interest comes nearer to being metaphysical than any other school with .the possible exception of the Yin Yang

The Logicians, frequently referred to as the School of Names (Ming

Chia), were chiefly concerned with problems relating to the relativity and changeableness of all phenomena, as was Hui Shih, or with the concept of universals…the "names" of things…which, according to Kung…sun Lung, were absolute and unchangeable. Hui Shih contended that concrete things were undergoing

constant change and were, therefore, different from one instant to the next. Kung…sun Lung insisted that the "names" of things, similar to Platonic ideas, were absolute and unchangeable. In order to substantiate his position, he employed epistemological arguments. One of his most famous arguments is contained in his ".discussion concerning "a white horse is not a horse

Many of the Logicians arguments posed paradoxes and logical conundrums and, for this reason, were disparaged by the Confucianists. For example, the great Chinese historian of the Han, Ssu…ma T'an, himself a Confucianist described the work of the Logicians as "minute examinations of trifling points in complicated and elaborate)statements, which made it impossible for others to refute their ideas."(۱

Because of the lack of interest in metaphysical questions peculiar to Chinese classical philosophers in general, the influence of the Logicians was not especially significant in .the development of later Chinese thought

The Legalists, whose most important representative is Han Fei Tzu (died ۲۳۳ B. C.), were not concerned with problems of metaphysics, logic, or epistemology. Their fundamental concern was political: What happens when a ruler is weak, wicked, or ?incompetent? How is a State to be unified and governed

For the Legalists, the answer was impersonal law in the

.Quoted in Fung Yu…lan's A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, p. ۸۱ -۱

place of personal ethics or moral principles. The Legalists, though at odds with the Confucianists, show a similarly overriding interest in the practical aspects of political and social philosophy. Metaphysical speculation is a pastime which neither of these .classical schools pursued

Tsou Yen (۳۰۵…۲۴۰ B.C.) of the Yin Yang school probably represents the extent to which the Chinese were willing to pursue metaphysical speculation without the pressure of

foreign ideas. Certainly the Taoist and Yin Yang represent indigenous Chinese .metaphysical thinking prior to the advent of Buddhism

The Yin Yang school, however, lacks genuine metaphysical profundity and, in essence, appears to be based on a dualistic theory of the interaction of the female .and male principles of the universe, the Yin and the Yang respectively

Neither the Yin Yang school nor Taoism possesses a meta…physical presentation approaching the works of Plato or Aristotle. One has the feeling that the thinkers of these two schools educed one or two ideas and then used them uncritically and .mechanically to explain various phenomena

In general, Chinese philosophers either ignored metaphysics or showed only a spasmodic interest in understanding, logically and systematically, the nature and character of the Ultimate Reality. Only after the introduction of Buddhism did the .Chinese philosophers concern themselves seriously with metaphysics

Even the basic metaphysical problems, such as God, universals, space and time,“ matter and spirit, were either not discussed, except in Buddhism, or discussed only occasionally, and then always for the sake of ethics.”(۱) Chinese thinkers confined themselves to social and

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۱ – Wing…tsit Chan, “Synthesis in Chinese Metaphysics,” Essays in East…West Philosophy, ed. with an Introduction by Charles A. Moore, University of Hawaii Press; .Honolulo, ۱۹۵۱, p. ۱۶۳

political thought; they had always in mind the capability of their respective philosophies for practical implementation. As metaphysics was, in the main, slighted .or ignored, so were epistemological problems

An examination of the history of Chinese philosophy illustrates plentifully that Chinese philosophers occupied themselves with questions of human adjustment to nature or

the individual's adjustment to society. The Taoists stressed the former, the Confucianists the latter. The Taoists regarded society as unnatural and unnecessary .for Good Life. In this respect it resembles Romanticism

Confucianism maintains that society is natural and necessary for the life of a human being. Society permits a man to satisfy his ethical obligations and also affords him an opportunity to enrich his life with learning, art, music, and moral example. Society is not only a structure of ethical and social relationships but also a product of man's .cultural heritage

Man as a member of society is able to appreciate tradition, literature, ceremonies…all those things which are not absolutely necessary for physical survival but which are nevertheless the very essence of civilized, cultured existence. As Taoism lauds the .state of nature, it is akin to Romanticism; Confucianism is allied to Classicism

In addition to a lack of metaphysical interest or regard for epistemological problems, Chinese philosophical thought, both classical and medieval, is distinguished by its patent deficiency of logical refinement. Chinese philosophical discourses are usually .unsystematic and infrequently based upon rigid logical argumentation

The classical philosopher's approach was simple; his use of an elaborate philosophical .method was almost non…existent

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The Chinese philosopher was primarily engrossed in questions of ethics and with practical matters relating to the ordering of society according to proper moral .principles or, as in the case of Taoism, with the way of nature and naturalness

The arguments employed by the philosophers were eminently practical in the sense that they made no appeal to complicated logical analysis, theory, or hypothesis, but appealed to man's common sense. It would be helpful to illustrate the type of “logical” .argumentation frequently encountered in the works of Chinese classical philosophers

The ancients, who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first

ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. .Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts

Wishing to rectify their hearts they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. .Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being" complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole (kingdom was made tranquil and happy."(١

That an over–emphasis upon logical analysis may inhibit novel ideas and conceptions of reality, few

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.James Legge, Tr., Great Learning (Ta Hsueh), Verses ۴ and ۵ -١

will deny. Too great a reliance upon logical clarity precision and consistency may lead to sterile thought. The later medieval period in Europe, which was dominated by Scholastic logic, illustrates sufficiently the perils involved in an over–estimation of the power and validity of logical analysis. The Scholastics appear to have regrettably .misunderstood the value of logic

The medieval Schoolmen erred in the direction of too much emphasis upon logical acuteness whereas, in contradistinction, the Chinese appear to have been blind to the importance of logical refinement. Whether through disinterest or because of the intrinsic difficulties involved in their own written language (pictographs and ideographs), Chinese philosophers do not seem to have understood the proper role of .logic in the acquisition of new knowledge

In one of his works, Alfred North Whitehead states succinctly the crucial part logic may play in the advancement of the frontiers of human knowledge. "Logic, properly used," he writes, "does not shackle thought. It gives freedom, and above all, boldness. Illogical thought hesitates to draw conclusions, because it never knows either what it means, or what it assumes, or how far it trusts its own assumptions or what will be the effect of any modification of assumptions."

Continuing, he remarks, "Also the mind untrained in that part of constructive logic which is relevant to the subject in hand will be ignorant of the sort of conclusions which follow from various sorts of assumptions, and will be correspondingly dull in divining the inductive laws".(١) One can hardly

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١ - Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education, The New American Library, New York, ١٩٥٥, p. ١٢٢.

fail to agree with Whitehead's observation when studying Chinese classical philosophy as well as much of the philosophy of the later schools in China.

By confining their attention to the world of everyday affairs and common sense, the Chinese savants felt no need to engage in metaphysical speculation in a systematic manner, nor did they feel any desire to indulge in the luxury of logical subtlety.

"Therefore," a well...known Japanese philosopher comments, "when their philosophy did not vanish in the mist of vague mysticism, as in the ease of Taoism, it tenaciously clung to the agnosticism of everyday experience . . . ."(١) As we study the Taoist classssic, Tao Te Ching, we can readily understand what is meant by a philosophy losing itself "in the mist of vague mysticism," for example:

The Tao that can be told of is not the Absolute Tao. The Names that can be given are not Absolute Names. The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; the Named is the Mother of All Things. Therefore oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion in order to see the Secret of Life; oftentimes, one regards life with passion, in order to see its

.manifest results

These two (the Secret and its manifestations) are (in their nature) the same; they are given different names when they become manifest. They may both be called the :Cosmic Mystery

Reaching from the Mystery into the Deeper Mystery Is the Gate to the Secret of All (Life.(۲

This may be an example of "pure speculation" on

p: ۱۰۲

Daisetz Teitaro, A Brief History of Early Chinese Philosophy, Second Edition. - ۱ .Probsthain Co., London, ۱۹۱۴, pp. ۱۱-۱۲

Laotse, the Book of Tao, tr. Lin Yutang in Wisdom of China and India, ed. idem, The -۲ .Modern Library, New York, ۱۹۵۶, p. ۵۸۳

the part of a Chinese philosopher. If so, one is inclined again to agree with Whitehead who also observed: "Pure speculation, undisciplined by the scholarship of detailed fact or the scholarship of exact logic, is on the whole more useless than pure scholarship, (unrelieved by speculation."(۱

The Taoists seem to have engaged in "pure speculation" fairly consistently. For their part, the Confucianists emphasized learning and traditional scholarship and the ."business" of social existence and its obligations

Unfortunately, the excessive engrossment in the realm of the commonplace was as detrimental as the marked tendency to mysticism. Both of these extremes tended to stultify the adventure of thought toward new possibilities of achievement. When .Chinese thought did not float away in the clouds, it remained earth-bound

Granted that the confluence of the regressive theory of history, the lack of metaphysical speculation, and a pronounced deficiency of logical refinement are distinctive features of classical Chinese philosophy, in general, probably the most

significant characteristic the one which may help explain why metaphysics and logic languished…is the dominant concern with ethics, for, indeed, there is little doubt that .ethics was the main concern of Chinese philosophers

There were but few exceptions during the classical period and even thereafter. Ethics played a major role in Chinese philosophy. “The moral life,” Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki writes, “can be said to have been the only philosophical subject which . . . has seriously interested the Chinese, and which has been considered worthy of their earnest (speculation.”(۲

By focusing their attention on

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۱ – Alfred North 'Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, The New American Library, New .York, ۱۹۵۵, pp. ۱۱۲…۱۳

۲ – Ibid., p. ۴۷.

ethical problems…man and his life in society or in harmony with nature…the Chinese seriously restricted the content of philosophy in their culture. The special facts of geography, economics, and sociology exercised a strong influence on the Chinese climate of philosophical opinion and may account, as we have noted, for their almost .exclusive concentration on ethic

In the final analysis, the classical Chinese philosopher's ideal was the attainment of the Good Life here and now on earth. Most classical thinkers assented to Confucius :observation

“While you do not know life, how can you know about death?” The world of the present requires man's full attention, courage, and ingenuity. To the great majority of Chinese philosophers, righteousness, family, economic security, and a stable social order were the main objects of study. During the later periods of Chinese philosophy, though there were occasional lapses from these objectives, they remained .permanent features in the Chinese philosophical tradition

Tang Chung‐shu (c. ۱۷۹‐۱۰۴ B. C.) was the thinker who contributed most to the ultimate triumph of Confucianism over all the other schools of the Chou in the Han Dynasty (۲۰۶ B. C.‐‐۲۰۰ A. D.).

Later, it is true that Confucianism was overshadowed by Buddhism during the period of Division (۲۲۱‐۵۸۹ A.D.) following the break‐up of the Han Empire, but, to survive in China as an effective, popular force, Buddhism had to accommodate itself to the peculiarities of the Chinese philosophical temper which we have endeavoured to sketch in the preceding pages.

Those schools of Buddhism which

tried to preserve their original philosophical purity failed to achieve currency in China and, hence, remained ineffectual in Chinese intellectual life. Chinese Buddhism enjoyed immense support because it was Buddhism a la chinoise.

In short, the cardinal limitation of Chinese philosophy stems from its inordinate attention to what Whitehead calls "practical reason."(۱)

Chinese thought was too closely associated with practical matters, with social adjust‐ment. It was blinded, so to speak, by the affairs of the present. In concentrating on the "practical reason," it neglected "speculative reason" which is allied with logic and systematic discourse.

Here we must stress that flights of fancy or sheer contemplation are not to be construed as speculative reason or speculative philosophy. Speculative philosophy seeks a comprehensive understanding of the nature of reality, of God, of man, and of the universe; it strives for a synoptic vision; while, in contrast, practical reason of practical philosophy is concerned with the empirical approach to concrete problems of living and action.

The speculative philosopher, as here described, often regards his opposite as a victim of spurious knowledge, lost in the hustle and bustle of the marketplace. Though the

speculative philosopher may frequently be at odds with the practical philosopher, each needs the other. Unfortunately, the practical thinker may be oblivious of what his counterpart is about and may regard his pursuits as quite extraneous to the .business of living

The speculative thinker does not deny the importance of practical reason; he presupposes it and moves along on a plane above the

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.Idem, The Function of Reason, Princeton University Press, Princeton, ۱۹۲۹ -۱

details of the everyday world. It should be noted that the practical activities of the mind produce data which the speculative thinker may utilize in the formulation of new theoretical possibilities, and these in turn may stimulate the activities of the practical philosopher in his desire to implement them in new social programmes and in new .technologies

This interplay between these two types of reason or philosophical endeavour constitutes a kind of creative cultural symbiosis. If a civilization neglects either the .practical or the speculative type of reason, it will be affected adversely

China, until the impact of the modern world was felt, was an example of the harmful effects of a pragmatic, utilitarian philosophical orientation. Though authorities differ on the precise amount of weight to be given to its philosophical orientation as a cause of the somnolence of Chinese society, there appears to be agreement that the stress on practicality and social ethics, especially of Confucianism, played a most important .role

Science and technology were retarded; there was no speculative thought to challenge the mind towards new heights of achievement; the scholar class, reared on .mundane philosophy, was dominant

This is not to say that Confucian civilization was not a creative and remarkable

civilization in many areas; it is merely an endeavour to point out why a certain type of mind did not flourish. Philosophies which concentrate too completely on social adjustment and utility paralyze, if they do not actually destroy, individual creativity and spontaneity in other avenues of human

p: ۱۰۶

.development

Just as civilizations have cramped the individual by a preponderant religious or materialistic orientation, so the same cramping may occur when social utility is made .the absolute measure of value

The case of pre…modern Chinese civilization may furnish an example of the great danger attached to continually stressing the "social" or "practical" value of thought. The continued vigour of a culture depends upon how well it is replenished with new .insights and challenged by new visions of possibility

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Chapter ۳: Pre–Islamic Iranian Thought

point

Pre-Islamic Iranian Thought by Alessandro Bausani, Ph.D, Professor of Persian (Language and Literature, University of Naples (Italy

A summary sketch of the philosophical thought of pre…Islamic Iran is both a difficult and an easy task difficult in the

sense that the texts on which this study must be based are not philosophical in the proper sense of the word, but rather theological or sometimes even mythological, and we have to abstract from them their philosophical gist, translating their ideas into modern philosophical terminology, through a rather personal work of interpretation; easy in the sense that, in this work of reinterpretation, we have to renounce completely a solution of the extremely complicated historical problems put by Iranic .philology

An attempt at a philosophical reinterpretation of the Mazdaic outlook can be based, in our opinion, exclusively on the only concrete and systematic form of Mazdaism we know: the late Mazdaism of the Pahlavi books of the Sassanian period and the early .times of Islam

The almost insoluble problems raised by the pre…Islamic religion (or, according to others, religions) of Iran depend chiefly on the extreme confusion of different types of .religiosity…local religion, religion of the elite, etc

Concerning the sources of Mazdaism the only comparatively sure points are (a) that the Gathas of the Avesta are very old and probably date back to Zarathustra himself (e. ۷۰۰-۶۰۰ B.C.); and (b) that the most systematic and the richest Pahlavi texts were written in the third/ninth century, i.e., two centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran.

An accurate dating of the materials between these two chronological limits (the seventh century B.C. and the ninth century A.D.) seems still impossible and all the learned conclusions of the scholars (who often change their minds from year to

p: ۱۰۹

year) appear to be no more than conjectures.

Moreover, the materials chronologically placed between these two dates are sometimes typologically so incongruous that it is very easy to abstract from them a certain type of religion and attribute it to the founder, making of him, e.g., either on idealistic philosopher or a shaman, and then explain the development of Mazdaism that followed either as the decay or a repaganization of a highly philosophical religion, or as a successive theologization of originally mystical perceptions.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the only comprehensive approach to the enormous and extremely varied religio-philosophical materials contained in the corpus of Mazdaic texts is to consider them synchronistically as a whole. Though one may not agree with many details of Professor Corbin's theories, one cannot but agree with him when he writes:

"A spiritual morphology that attempts a reconstruction and revaluation of the actually living devotion impels us to consider the canonical Avesta, or at least what we possess of it, its ritual, as preserving at its centre the Psalms (Gathas) of Zarathustra and the middle-Iranic (Pahlavi) and Parsi translations and commentaries as a whole.

Also in this case, it seems that when the believer recites his Bible or when the Liturgy is celebrated, all objections taking historical stratification as a pretext fail to reach their aim. If we always ask: `Whence does it come?' we practically do nothing more

than wander here and there, formulating hypotheses vainly following one another. :We should rather ask

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At what does it aim?' Then the soul would answer, accounting for what has been its` (purpose."(۱

We shall, therefore, make as the basis of the present chapter the latest form of pre…Islamic Iranian religiosity, the form represented by the whole corpus of the Avestic and Pahlavi Scriptures possessed and venerated by the Parsecs (not in the sense, of course, that we shall follow necessarily their interpretation of them). For it is safer for a philosopher to interpret an actual and concrete corpus of religious scriptures, than to interpret the ever…changing reinterpretation of them made by the .historians

It will be useful, however, to reproduce, as an introduction; the most widely accepted diachronical explanation of the numerous so…called "contradictions" of the present Mazdaic corpus, even though it does not seem to be completely satisfactory. The difficulty is that much of the materials generally considered being very old are much .later or at least they "function" in a much later theological organism

The branch of the Aryans who in about the eleventh century B. C. detached themselves from their brethren, penetrating afterwards into the jungles of India (a natural place for magic and richest mytho…poetical phantasy) and made the yellow and dry plateau of Iran their country, had obviously brought with them their naturalistic religion, clearly delineated in the Vedas and rather similar to that of old .Rome and Greece

The sacrifices of animals (e. g., the ox) and the ceremonial libation of the fermented juice of a plant, haoma (Skr. soma), were

p: ۱۱۱

.Corbin, "Terre Celeste et Corps de Resurrection," Eranos Jahrbuch,Vol. XXII, p. ۹۹ -۱

.frequent and taken as sacred rites

At a certain moment, not yet determined with sufficient clearness, though the majority of scholars seem now to fix it at the sixth century B.C., the remarkable personality of a religious reformer, Zarathustra, appeared in the oriental zone of the .Iranian plateau

His name still resists all attempts at etymological interpretation. "The man with the old camels" seems to be the most accepted one. Zarathustra, possibly utilizing a pre…existing naturalistic sky…god (Varuna), created a new monotheism, so strong that ".the name of the old gods (devas) came to signify "demons

This was, up to some time ago, a "classical" theory of the historians of Mazdaism, but now it seems to cede to new hypotheses maintaining that the demonization of the devas was prior to Zarathustra. Henning even asserted that Zarathustra's reform was a "protest against monotheism." The seventeen hymns (Gathas), written in a rather archaic language and forming the central part of the Avesta are generally considered .to be the work of Zarathustra himself

The Gathas uphold veneration for a single supreme God, Ahura Mazdah, the "Wise Lord" (according to some like Pagliaro, "the Thinking Lord"). He is accompanied by a cortege of abstract quasi…personified powers or attributes, the six Amesha Spentas (Holy Immortals): Asha (the Cosmic Law or Righteousness), Vohu Manah (Good Thought or Benevolence), Khshathra (Sovereignty), Armaiti (Piety, Docility), Haurvatat .((Integrity), Ameretat (Immortality

The Gathas reject rites and sacrifices, especially the ritual killing of cattle and the Haoma cult, preach a very

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high personal ethic, and enforce wise social laws, foremost of which is the fostering of .agriculture against nomadism

In order to explain evil in the world, the idea of the influence of the Evil Spirit (Angra Mainyu) is introduced; in front of it stands Spenta Mainyu (the Holy Spirit), not identical (at least in this oldest stage) with the Wise Lord (Ahura Mazdah). This monotheism, tendentiously dualistic but, in any case, clearly prophetic and anti…naturalistic, .("crossed the spiritual sky of Iran as a meteor" (Duchensne Guillemin

The religion which will be now called Mazdaic…mazdayasna means "one who worships the Wise (Lord)" reabsorbed in course of time some of the older "heathen" rites and cults, e. g., Haoma's cult, and also accepted the naturalistic gods of the ancient pantheon, some of them like Mithra, the god of sunlight and, then, of the Covenant and Oath being just adopted, while others being inescapably transformed into deva's. According to some scholars, however, the religion of Mithra existed as a distinct creed .in old Iran

At the same time dualism, not so strong and systematized in the beginning, was becoming deeper: it became a cosmologico…metaphysical contrast between a good God, Ahura Mazdah, and an evil God, Angra Mainyu, both having their own "creations," the former being accompanied by his Amesha Spentas (ever more clearly personified in course of time) and Yazatas (Venerable Beings, "gods," like Mithra, the goddess Anahita probably introduced from Babylon, etc.), and the latter by the band of the devils and

.drujs (literally "lies"). Lying seems to have been the worst sin for Zarathustra

This religion was at a certain moment monopolized by the Magi. Who the Magi were, is another crux of the historians of Mazdaism. Herodotus speaks of the Magi as a tribe of Media and attributes to them a religion rather different from that of the old Persians. Father G. Messina tried to demonstrate that they formed a closed caste with such characteristic features as those of a "tribe." According to him, their name .(magavan) means "bearers of the gift" of Zarathustra's doctrine

Their power increased rapidly and it seems that already during the Achaemenid

period (۵۵۸…۳۳۰ B.C.) the education of the future kings was entrusted to them. They succeeded in spreading among the people certain ethical principles and rites of their .founder's religion

But this success was not complete, and this is one of the many possible explanations of the discrepancies between the visible and popular religion of the Persians and the quasi…esoteric religion of the Magi. According to the same view, the Magi became afterwards the "philosophers" of their doctrine, and tried to develop it especially to .explain its dualism

Christian sources of the fourth century A.D. (Theodore of Mopsuestia) speak of the birth, in the milieu of the Magi, of the doctrine or heresy called Zurvanism that explained away dualism through the acceptance of a supreme god Zurvan (time) as father of both Ahura Mazdah and Angra Mainyu. But some scholars now speak of Zurvanism as

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an actually autonomous religion; and others, turning the preceding theory upside down, consider the Magi to be the bearers of the less philosophical, most magical, and .punctiliously ritualistic aspect of Zoroastrianism

In the meanwhile ritual and cult, with complicated precepts of legal purity, were gradually prevailing and when, after a dark period of incubation under the Arsacid Dynasty (۲۵۰ B. C. ۲۲۴ A. D.) the caste of the Magi obtained unparalleled power, with the advent of the Sassanians (۲۲۴…۶۵۱ A.D.), Mazdaism, now a State religion, became .an intolerant faith, persecutor of every form of heresy

Heresy (as it happened first with Manichaeism supported at its beginnings by King Shahpur, ۲۴۱…۲۷۲ A. D., and then with communistic Mazdakism, favoured by King Kawat, ۴۸۸…۵۳۱) was sometimes a useful pretext for the warrior caste of the kings…a caste that seemed to possess its own religious tradition different from that of the .priestly caste…to escape the excessive power of the Magi

The discontentment hidden under the outwardly uniform orthodoxy, the unbearable poverty of the peasants, never totally imbued with the religion of the elite, and no doubt possessing their own religious customs and traditions practically unknown to us, and the struggle between Throne and Altar, were some of the causes that .rendered the conquest of Iran by the Arabs so astonishingly easy

The Mazdaic religion is commonly defined as "the religion of dualism." A deeper .analysis shows that dualism is not the only basic feature of Mazdaism

The account of Mazdaic philosophy that follows is divided in

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a rather unorthodox way, necessitated by the fact that Mazdaism is not a philosophy, into the following four sections: (۱) The Concept of Myth, (۲) Mazdaic Angelism, (۳) the .Double Dualism, (۴) the Idea of Time

The Concept of Myth .۱

One of the most interesting features of Mazdaic thought is its being at the same time mythical and theologico…philosophical. The Mazdaic texts are very rich in myths, but these are never narrated ex professo; they are rather hinted at in the texts the chief purpose of which is not that of telling myths. Sufficient attention has not been paid to .this "style" of Mazdaic Scriptures

This is true not only of the later Pahlavi books but also of Avesta itself. In it myths are inlaid in liturgical hymns or legal and canonical texts in the form of explanations and comments. Avesta shows thus a rather "recent" type of mythtelling. The myth has never in Avesta…even in the case of myths having a naturalistic origin…the freshness of the Vedic myth; it is always in a phase of rational or theological explanation, and is .used as a hint or example in texts that remain fundamentally theological

We have just mentioned "myths having an ancient naturalistic origin." A sufficiently clear instance of a Mazdaic myth of this type is that of the killed dragon. In the Aban Yasht(۱) a hymn to the angel of Waters, Ardvi Sura Anahita, containing a list of all

those who in ancient times made sacrifices to that angel…goddess, we read among other stories this

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.Yt., ۵. ۳۳ ff -۱

passage, clearly explaining and confirming the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice to that :angel

To her did Thraetaona, the heir of the valiant Athwya clan, offer up a sacrifice in the " four…cornered Varena, with a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten .thousand lambs

He begged of her a boon; saying: `Grant me this, O Good, most beneficent Ardvi Sura Anahita! that I may overcome Azhi Dahaka, the three…mouthed, the three…headed, the six…eyed one who has a thousand senses, that most powerful, fiendish Druj, that demon, baleful to the world, the strongest Druj that Angra Mainyu created against the material world, to destroy the world of the good principle; and that I may deliver his two wives, Savanghavach and Erenavach, who are the fairest of body amongst women, and the most wonderful creatures in the world.' Ardi Sura Anahita granted him that boon, as he was offering libations, giving gifts, sacrificing, and entreating that ".she would grant him that boon

Comparison with other cultures allows us to reconstruct an ancient myth originally connected with the New Year Feast and with the rites aiming at defeating drought. A divine, Thraetaona (the Faridun of Firdausi's Shahnameh), conquers the fortress of the Dragon and defeats and kills him. The Waters that were prisoners in his castle are .now freed and so are the women held by the monster as slaves in his harem

Now rain falls fertilizing the earth and the young hero…liberator celebrates the hieres gamos with the liberated women. But this

is simply a reconstruction and the readers or hearers of the Avesta probably had no idea of the original, authentically mythico_ritual, meaning of this tale; it probably sounded to them simply as a nice example of pietas towards the angel and of national .heroism by Thraetaona

But there are also other myths, utilized exactly like this and in similar contexts, of a purely theologico_symbolical origin. For instance, there is the myth of Vishtaspa who frees the enchained Daena, told always with the same emblematical conciseness in (the Farvardin Yasht.(١

This Yasht is chiefly a list of fravashis (see below) or holy men, to whom the believer offers sacrifices. The enterprises of some of these holy men are narrated here in order to encourage the worshipper to offer sacrifice to their respective fravashi. Concerning the fravashi of Vishtaspa, the king who protected Zarathustra, accepted :his religion (Daena), and spread it, the hymn says

We worship the fravashi of the holy king Vishtaspa; the gallant one, who was the" incarnate Word, the mighty_speared and lordly one; who, driving the Druj before him, sought wide room for the holy Daena . . . ; who made himself the arm and support of this law of Ahura, the law of Zarathustra. We took her (i. e., the Daena, or Religion) standing bound from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle (of the world), high ruling, never falling back, holy, nourished with plenty of cattle and pastures, blessed with plenty of cattle

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.Ibid., ١٣. ٩٩_١٠٠ -١

".and pastures

Here we see, contrary to the former instance, a myth germinating from history. The process of mythicization has reached a very advanced stage, but not so advanced as to render it impossible to recognize the historical materials that lie at the basis of a myth. First of all, a Daena means "Religion," in a quasi_personified sense; secondly,

the fact…myth is connected with the work of the Prophet Zarathustra and that of the .holy King Vishtaspa

But it is highly interesting to note that the attributes attached to his name are the same as those of the angel Saraosha(۱) of which Vishtaspa is, in a sense, the terrestrial emblem; in the same way as Zarathustra is the terrestrial symbol of Ahura Mazdah. We notice here an important moment of the passage from history to myth in Mazdaism and also, at the same time, an important aspect of the Mazdaic approach .to myth and reality

Mazdaic thought, while denaturalizing and ethicizing naturalistic myths, embodies historical events, in semi…mythical persons, and in so doing "angelizes" history. We are in the presence of a "visionary" theology…philosophy, in which intellectual entities assume personal forms, moving in an intermediate world of vision (probably a heritage of the mystical experiences of the Founder) so organized as to give a .characteristic Unitarian savour to the whole Mazdaic thought

Angelism .۲

Once the mythical logic of Mazdaism has been understood, we can proceed to the study of some of the most significant details of the Mazdaic Weltanschauung. The first key to

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.Ibid., ۱۱. ۲۳ -۱

open its shrines is that, in Mazdaic thought, the Absolute is a personal God, the Wise .Lord Ahura Mazdah, a God that reminds us of the Biblical and Qur'anic God

But His attributes are not (be they eternal or created) intelligible concepts; rather they are themselves "persons" or angels." Professor Corbin(۱) rightly remarks that the Mazdean, instead of putting to himself the questions: "What is Time? What is Earth? "?What is Water?", asks: "Who is Time? Who is Earth? Who is Water

And so we find in Mazdaic texts that Time is a Youth of fifteen, Earth is the Archangel Spenta Armaiti (the Holy Piety), Water is the beautiful goddess…angel Ardvi Sura Anahita. The problem lies in rightly interpreting the verb is: in which sense are these images of vision what they represent? Certainly they are not angels in the Biblical and the Qur'anic sense of mere messengers or servants of God; Corbin compares them .rightly with the dii…angeli of Proclus

The Zamyad Yasht, speaking of the six Amesha Spentas, sings thus: (٢) "..the Amesha Spentas, the bright ones, whose looks perform their wish, tall, quickly coming to do, strong, and lordly, who are undecaying and holy; who are all seven (their seventh is Ahura Mazdah himself) of one thought; who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is the same, whose speech is the same, whose father and commander is the same, namely the Maker, Ahura Mazdah; who see one another's soul thinking

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١- Corbin, op. cit., p. ٩٩.

٢- Yt., ١٩. ١٥=٢٠.

of good thoughts, thinking of good words, thinking of good deeds, thinking of Garonmana (the supreme paradise, `house of the hymns'), and whose ways are shining as they go down to the libations; who are the makers and governors, the shapers and overseers, the keepers and preservers of these creations of Ahura .Mazdah

It is they who shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die, will become never decaying, never rotting, ever living, eves increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish . . . ."

Here it seems that the Amesha Spentas play a role not very dissimilar to that of the "persons" of the Christian Trinity. It is remarkable that they are six, but are called seven, Ahura Mazdah himself being the seventh. This concept of Ahura Mazdah

adding himself as the last to every hierarchical series of beings is often found in Mazdaic books. In order to understand it we must remember a sentence in the first (chapter of Bundahishn:(۱

For Ohrmazd is both spiritual and material," or, according to other translations: "For" Ohrmazd both creations are celestial"; in other words, everything is, for him, in trans… cendent, celestial stage. God can descend into all the stages of Being, eternally First and Last of every embodied or disembodied hierarchy, because, sub specie Dei, "everything is transcendent and celestial and this descent can in no way "contaminate

p: ۱۲۱

.Bundahishn; I. ۳۲ -۱

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But these six Amesha Spentas are also the archangelic emblem…personification of the primordial elements: Earth (Spenta Armaiti), Cattle (Vohu Manah), Fire (Asha), Metals .((Khshathra), Water (Haurvatat), Plants (Ameretat

They are the elements not as allegories of them, but as living personal symbols, as "Lords of the Species." The concept of Ratu, Lord of the Species, is present everywhere in Mazdaic books. The Lord of the Species "Woman" is, for instance, the mythico…historical Daena, "'religion"; the Lord of the Species "Bird" is the mythical bird .Saena meregha, or in modern Persian simurgh

The theological abstractions that presented themselves to the philosophico…ecstatic mind of the Prophet Zarathustra in a period in which a transformation of the mythico…theological concepts into pure philosophy was premature, assumed the .plastic life of the gods of the former naturalistic pantheon

Holy Piousness, for example, came to be the Earth instead of remaining an abstractly pure intellectual form. Or, better, it did not come to be in the historical sense of the expression, but was probably already so double…faced in the mind of the Prophet, the

historical Zarathustra or some other prophet, whose personal mystical experience is .fundamental to the understanding of this as of all other concepts

The connection of the Amesha Spentas with their natural kingdoms is already retraceable in the Gathas. In Yt. ٣١.٩Armaiti is seen as specially favouring the earth's tiller. A verse after, the thrifty toiler in the fields is called one “who nourisheth Vohu .Manah (“the Good Thought” the Cattle), while in v

p: ١٢٢

.Ahura Mazdah will give “the fat of Good Thought (Cattle)” to him who is His friend ٢١

But in the same Gathas we often hear that Ahura Mazdah created the world through Good Thought, which in these contexts seems to have nothing to do with cattle. Whatever the historical origins of these angelico…symbolical identifications may have been, the fact remains that they had the highly important function of transfiguring the .elements of nature into ethical values

Or, to put it better, there is an exchange of functions: natural elements are coloured with ethos, and ethical values live a cosmic life. This is one of the most typical features .of Mazdaism

The Supreme God of Mazdaism has further interesting aspects that make him rather different from the God of classical monotheisms. He is, for instance, situated in a sort of transcendent Time and Space,(١) Boundless Time and Space…Light, or Uncreated Light (but the word for Space, gas, could be also mythologically interpreted as .(”“throne

There is, in other words, a time…tension in God. But the student of Mazdaism becomes even more astonished when he comes to know that Ahura Mazdah has got a soul, or better a fravashi. As the idea of soul is a specially interesting aspect of Mazdaic ”.thought, we shall treat it here as a particular case of Mazdaic “angelism

In Mazdaic anthropology, according to Bundahishn,(٢) man was “fashioned in five .parts…body (tan), soul (jan), spirit (ruvan), prototype (adhvenak) and fravashi

Body is the material part; soul, that which is

p: ۱۲۳

.Cf. Bundahishn, I. ۲ -۱
.Ibid., III. ۱۱ -۲

connected with the wind…the inhaling and exhaling of breath; spirit, that which with consciousness in the body hears, sees, speaks and knows; the prototype is that which is situated in the station of the Sun; the fravashi is that which is in the presence of .Ohrmazd, the Lord

He was created in this fashion because, during the period of the assault of the Aggressor, men die, their bodies rejoin the earth, their souls the wind, their prototypes the Sun, their spirits the fravashi, so that the demons could not destroy ”.the spirit

This is what happens during the period of the “Assault”' or of the Mixture (gumechishn) of the good and evil creations. At the end of this world, however, a real resurrection of the body will take place: the dead will be “reconstructed” (rist virast). The Saviour (born from Zarathustra's miraculously preserved sperm) will perform a sacrifice (yazishn) in which the bull Hatayosh will be killed, and from his fat and the white Haoma the ambrosia (anosh) will be prepared. All men will drink it and become .immortal

A pure concept of the “immortality of the soul,” in the Greek sense of the term, seems extraneous to Mazdaic thought. Every (good) man is already an angel, fravashi, eternally in the presense of Ahura Mazdah; resurrection of the body too is not exactly identical with the same idea in Christian and Muslim tradition, for it happens in a moment which is not, properly speaking, a historical moment; but the epoch of

p: ۱۲۴

.frasho…kereti (Phl. frashkart) which is no more in Finite Time but in Boundless Time

The metaphysical peculiarity of this epoch is also clearly shown by the immolation of ".the Bull, otherwise in "normal time, a horrible sin for Mazdaism

While the first three parts of the human compound do not need any explanation, we have to consider here the two concepts of prototype (adhvenak) and fravashi. The former…is the heritage of an older astro…biological idea, common also in India, according to which the prototypical soul of the different categories of beings is preserved in the heavenly bodies. The race…type of Cattle is preserved, for instance, in the moon (gaochithra, "having the form of Kine," is an Avestic name for the moon), (and that of Plants in the stars.(١

Deeper and more easily interpretable in an ethical and philosophical way is the concept of fravashi. This term does not appear in the Gathas (which also ignore adhvenak, Mazdaicized afterwards), but in the so…called "more recent" parts of the Avesta it has already become the aspect that will remain fixed in the Pahlavi tradition. It is clearly kept distinct from "soul" in passages like Yt. ٢۶. ٧, and it seems that, at least .in the beginning, only heroes had been considered to be having a fravashi

Bailey's researches have demonstrated that the idea of fravashi is associated with "the defensive power emanating from a hero, even after his death." This originally :aristocratic idea suffered a process of democratization in the course of time

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.Cf. Yz., ١٢ -١

every (righteous) man thus got his fravashi, whose protective and defensive force is .exerted not only in his favour, but in favour of all those who invoke her

The "fravashis of the Righteous" are seen as protectors of specially sacred places, of the mythical lake or sea (Vouru…kasha, of the white Haoma, which we saw as an important ingredient of future ambrosia, of Zarathustra's semen from which the future Saviours will be born, etc. In their function as welcomers of the righteous souls .after death they remind us of the Germanic Valkyrs

But the fravashis are also something more. In a passage of Avesta[1] we read: “And these we present hereby to the fravashi of Zarathustra Spitama, the saint, for sacrifice, propitiation, and praise, and to those of the people who love Righteousness, with all the holy fravashis of the saints who are dead and who are living, and to those of men who are as yet unborn, and to those of the prophets who will serve us, and will labour to complete the progress and renovation of the world.”

Fravashis are, already now, real angelic doublets of the pious and good men, past, present, and future. Also the living seem to have already a fravashi in a sense slightly similar to but not at all identical with the “Guardian Angel” of the Christian tradition. But there is even more: we saw that Zarathustra, the Prophet, the “terrestrial God” as he is called in some parts of Avesta, has his fravashi,

p: ۱۲۶

۱- Ibid., ۲۴.۵.

and this is obvious. However, it may seem strange to a rationalistic mind that the Archangels and even Ahura Mazdah Himself have their fravashis.

In Vendidad ۱۹, ۴۶-۴۸ Zarathustra is invited to invoke the fravashi of Ahura Mazdah. This fascinating idea seems to assume a doublet of God Himself in a further hyper-transcendent dimension of Being; but, as is often the case with many original and highly interesting Mazdaic terms and concepts, this idea is mentioned as if by chance and is soon dropped, without any interpretation or comment.

These angelic doublets of the Good are also symbols of Free Choice (see also below). According to a typically Mazdaic myth-theologoumenon preserved in Bundahishn,[1] at the beginning of the millennia of the period of “Mixture” (gumechishn), Ahura Mazdah asked the fravashis whether they preferred to remain untouched by and protected from every danger in the invisible, transcendent world or whether they were ready to descend and incarnate themselves in the visible material world in order to struggle with Evil.

The fravashis accepted the second alternative. In this way a sort of de…doubling happened: now, in this material world the real man is his fravashi, his angelic ego, that is at the same time his destiny and his true transcendental self; the moral ".responsibility of man is, in a sense, "transcendentalized

Sin becomes equivalent to the treason of an angel. Metaphysically, every discussion on the existence of soul, etc., is rendered useless by this acceptance of the experienced fact of apriority of angel

p: ۱۲۷

.Bund.. III. ۲۱…۲۲ -۱

.over man

We said that the Gathas do not mention the term fravashi. But they contain another idea that certainly contributed to give a new and ethical meaning to the (probably .pre…Zarathustrian) heroical myth of the Valkyr…fravashi

We mean the idea of Daena (Phl. den). This term has been etymologically analyzed in the most discordant ways by philologists, looking for a semantic explanation which may give reason for the double meaning of the word: "religion" and "deep soul," or better angelic personification of human deeds. Here are some interesting Gathic :passages containing the term Daena

He who renders the Saint deceived, for him shall later be destruction: long life shall" be his lot in the darkness; foul shall be his foods his speech shall be of the lowest. This (is the life, O ye vile! to which your deeds and your Daena will bring you!"(۱

Yea, I will declare the world's two first spirits, of whom the more bountiful thus spake" to the harmful: Neither our thoughts, nor our commands, nor our understandings, nor (our beliefs, nor our deeds, nor our Daءnas, nor our souls are at one."(۲

But their (of the Evil ones) souls and their daenas will groan when they will approach" (the Chinvat Bridge .... ."(۳

Declare to me, O Ahura, that path of the Good Thought where the Daena of the" Saviours, i. e., their good works (ya hukereta), will taste the joys of Righteousness ... (.”(۴

A later text of Avesta, the Hadekht Nask(۵) tells of the

.Yt., ۳۱. ۲۰ -۱

.Ibid, ۴۵. ۲ -۲

.Ibid., ۴۶. ۱۱ -۳

Ibid., ۳۴. ۱۳ -۴

.Ibid., ۲۲۹ -۵

righteous soul meeting, after death, his Daena in the form of a beautiful girl of fifteen; here we see again the mytho…poetic tendency of Mazdaic thought, making of every .intelligible entity an angel

If we examine the above…quoted passages we shall see that in all of them we could freely translate Daena as "religious works," ethical acts metaphysically considered. The fact that these acts "groan"(۱) is not at all astonishing, if we remember the easiness with which Mazdeans personify ideas. This explains also how a fravashi has been attributed to Ahura Mazdah himself. Ahura Mazdah has indeed a Daena in the Gathas; in Bundahishun(۲) "omniscience and goodness," i. e., supreme religious .("actions, are called. Ahura Mazdah's den (Daena, "religion

The primary sense of Daena seems to be ethico…religious. It is "religious acting" that (as is the case in quite a different mental environment with the Hindu karma) creates a body, is representable visibly, and for Ahura Mazdah is His light(۳) and for man his angel of light. As pointed out by Pagliano, it was this Zarathustric Daena that modified .the warrior fravashis (Dumezil) into ethical angels

And it is in our opinion especially the myth of choice that gave also Ahura Mazdah a fravashi. In which sense is Ahura Mazdah so similar to the righteous man as to have

Himself a fravashi? Chiefly in the sense that Ahura Mazdah also made a choice of the (two primordial Spirits…say the Gathas-"the most holy Spirit chose the Truth."(۴

This sense of angelic ethos

p: ۱۲۹

.Ibid., ۴۶ -۱

Bund.. ۱. ۲ -۲

.Ibid -۳

.Yt., ۳۰. ۵ -۴

has thus produced one of the deepest ideas of Mazdaism, the image of the ".“soul…angel…valkyr…religious work

The Double Dualism .۳

Choice, the central ethical concept of Mazdaism, is a choice between two. This leads us to examine the radical dualism that, according to many, is the basic idea of this religious philosophy. According to a Gathic passage,(۱) “the two primordial Spirits that, in deep sleep, were heard as Twins, are the Excellent and the Evil, in thoughts, words, and deeds; and between these two the wise, not the foolish, have made their choice ....

And when these two Spirits met, they first established Life and Non…Life and (they decided) that, at the end, the worst existence would be that of the followers of Lie, and the best spiritual force (Manah) would be that of the followers of Truth. Between these two Spirits the followers of the Druj chose the acting of the Worst One, but the Most Holy Spirit, who covers himself with the firm stones of heaven as his robes, chose the Truth, and those who desired to satisfy Ahura Mazdah through righteous ".actions did the same

Good and evil are thus connected with an ethical choice, even if it seems that in the most ancient parts of Avesta, the Holy Spirit is not exactly identical with Ahura Mazdah but is probably Ahura Mazdah in His choosing, “acting” aspect. Another point

that shows the typical ethicism of Zarathustrian dualism is the name, “Lie,” attributed to the evil principle. But in Gathic thought the evil beings

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Ibid., ۳۰. ۳ ff -۱

.and the Evil Spirit are not “fallen creatures” of God, as in the classical monotheism

They are beings of a purely negative and destructive nature, which it would be absurd to think of as having been created by a good God and the final destiny of which seems to be that of being reduced to nothing. Ahriman, in a later Pahlavi catechism (Pandnamak…i Zartusht), is…if the translation is correct…“a being who does not exist, who received nothing in himself,” and the same is endowed in Bundahishn with the strange quality pas-bavishnih (“post…existence,” as opposed to the positive .(“pre…existence” of Ahura Mazdah

This ethos is, however…and here is again the typical feature of Mazdaic thought…strongly “cosmicized”: Goodness means, above all, promotion of Being, Life, and agriculture. It means “growth” (a word often used in the Mazdaic texts) of good material existence too. “Righteousness, the Bunduhishn says openly, obeys the same rules as (cosmic) Creation.”(۱) Ethos means also material positivity. The evil people (we often hear, in Mazdaic texts, curses against the nomads, the non…producers, and .the killers of cattle) are, above at the destroyers of existence

We can now better understand the second type of dualism, a dualism now not of choice but of transcendence between the invisible (or celestial) menok, and the visible (or terrestrial) getik; for God creates the terrestrial world to protect, foster, or help .((adhyarih) the celestial world, which is, in a way, its prototype, its root (bun

This dualism is, however, radically different from the Platonic dualism. A

.Bund., I. ۲۲ -۱

very instructive passage of one of the most philosophical treatises of Mazdaism, the Shikand Gumanik Vichar written in the third/ninth century,(۱) will show this difference .in a very clear way

The getik is the fruit (bar) of menok; menok is its root (bun) .... The fact that getik is“ the fruit and menok its root becomes clear when one thinks that every visible and .tangible thing passes from invisibility to visibility

It is already well known that man and the other visible and tangible creatures come from the invisible and intangible menok; in the same way, the form, the species, and the height and the breadth of a being are the same as those of the being that generated it; the body of man and other creatures, which is now manifested, was hidden and invisible in the semen that came from his parents; the semen itself, that was in the loins of the parents, passed to the stage of manifestation, visibility, and .tangibility

We can therefore know by certainty that this visible and tangible getik has been created from an invisible and intangible menok, and there is no doubt that it will come back from visibility and tangibility to the invisibility and intangibility of the same .”menok

W e see from this passage that this Mazdaic dualism differs from the Platonic and Gnostic dualism chiefly in the sense that for it matter and the world are in no way an ,“inferior” stage of Being. On the contrary, Matter is, in a sense

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.P.J de Menasce, Ed., p. ۹۲...۹۴ -۱

the most mature and perfect aspect (the fruit) of Spirit. It differs, however, also from the views implied by too simple a creationistic monotheism inasmuch as it seems to admit not only “one” personal God and His immediate creation, but various stages of .Being

Regarding the first point we refer the reader to a text(۱) in which it is clearly stated that the terrestrial world (getik) is higher in dignity than paradise (vahisht), because it is in this terrestrial, embodied, visible, and tangible world only that the battle against the powers of Evil can be fought and won…a struggle that makes it possible for the soul "to strive with his thought (ahang…menishn) towards Beatitude."

One of the most important miraculous deeds accomplished by the Prophet Zarathustra was that of breaking the bodily forms (shikastan…i kalput) of the Devils. Without their bodies the Devils are less perfect and less dangerous in their struggle. And here we find again the fundamentally ethical or rather cosmo…ethical function of the getik-menok dualism. Matter is useful in the struggle against Evil.

Regarding the second point, let us remember that in the first chapter of Bundahishn, which contains one of the most detailed accounts of the double creation of the world, the Mazdaic vision seems to involve various stages of creation, the highest of which are prototypical, emblematical. Even from some passages of the Gathas it may appear that God created first the prototypes of things, the Primordial Ox, the Protoanthropos, the Plant, etc.

Coming back to the

۱- Madan, Ed., Denkart, p. ۲۷۱.

last sentence of the above…quoted passages of Shikand Gumanik Vichar, we see how this life of positive struggle in the material world blossomed forth from the celestial world in a cycle that is at the end destined to be reabsorbed into the celestial and invisible stage, once its ethical task has been fulfilled. Thus it seems that even the first dualism, that between Good and Evil, will become a monism again at the consummation of Time. Here we come to the idea of Time and Cycle as the instrument of a victorious struggle.

۴. Time and Cycle

With regard to the question of Time also the Mazdaic thought shows an originality of conception that distinguishes it both from the Indian outlook assuming “flight from Time” as supreme salvation and beatitude, and from the classical Semitic forms of monotheism by which Time seems to be conceived as an irreversible “line.”

In order never to forget the peculiar “angelical” character of Mazdaism, the reader is reminded that in Bundahisn(۱) Time is an angelic person, a youth of fifteen, “bright, with white eyes, tall and mighty, whose might is from valour, not from robbery and violence.”

In other words, the Mazdean, in order to understand Time, did not intellectually “discuss” it as we do (that is why European scholars rather anachronistically find so many “contradictions” in the Mazdaic texts referring to Time) but rather experimented with it in vision. And this vision shows them what is told in the first chapter of the same theological book.(۲)

“Thus it

۱- Bund., III. ۳.

۲- Ibid., I. ۲ ff.

is revealed in the Good Religion. Ohrmazd was on high in omniscience and goodness: for Infinite Time He was ever in the Light. Omniscience and Light are the robes of Ohrmazd: some call them “religion” (den, see above) ....

The Time of the robes is infinite like Ohrmazd, and Goodness and Religion, during all the time of Ohrmazd, were, are and will be...Ahriman, slow in knowledge, whose will is to smite, was deep down in the darkness: (he was) and is, yet will not be. The will to smite is his robe, and darkness is his place: some call it the Endless Darkness.”

The cosmic drama unfolds itself in a Time and in a Space, but Ahrimanic time is composed of only two moments, past and present. Time and Space have also a

transcendent aspect. Transcendent Time is the so…called "Boundless Time" (zaman…i akanarak) or "Time of the Long Dominion" (zaman…i derang khvatai). Time (not of course our "serial" time) exists even in the heart of the Absolute. There is not, in Mazdaic thought, too simple a contrast between Time and Eternity. But let us continue .our reading and see the "aim" of our serial time

Ohrmazd creates first a purely transcendent prototypical creation. Ahriman rises from the depths, sees it, and rushes forward to smite and destroy it. When Ohrmazd sees that struggle is unavoidable, He says to Himself: "If I do not fix a time for battle against him, then Ahriman could do to my creation even as he

threatened, and the struggle and the mixture will be ever lasting; and Ahriman could settle in the mixed state of creation and take it to himself. And "Ohrmazd said to the Destructive Spirit: `Fix a time, so that by this pace we may extend the battle for nine '.thousand years

For He knows that by fixing a time in this way the Destructive Spirit would be made .powerless

Then the Destructive Spirit, not seeing the end, agreed to that treaty, just as two men who fight a duel fix a term saying: `Let us on such a day do battle till night falls.' This too did Ohrmazd know in His omniscience that within these nine thousand years, three thousand would pass entirely according to the will of Ohrmazd, three thousand years in mixture would pass according to the will of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman, and that in the last battle the Destructive Spirit would be made powerless and that He ".Himself would save creation from aggression

Limited time, i. e., serial time (during ۹,۰۰۰ years), is then conceived in an ethical light, just like the material world in which it is manifested. Serial time is something like a great detour, an ample digression from Infinite Time, but a substantially positive detour, because its aim is to render the battle against Evil possible and successful. .Hence come some important consequences

a) Destiny … If Time is a “youth” and if, as it is said in another text,(۱) “the creator) Ohrmazd dyed Time with

p: ۱۳۶

.Denkart, quoted in Zaehner, Zurvan, p. ۳۸۱ -۱

colour,” Time cannot be an a priori form in the Kantian sense. Time is objectively coloured; it can be practically identified with “destiny” (bakht, assigned lot). Some Mazdaic texts as, for example, the beautiful myth of the choice of the fravashis already mentioned, seem favourable to free…will, some others(۱) seem in favour of predestination. Apart from the problems connected with the historical formation of these ideas, we must say that Mazdaic theology solves the problem in a rather .consequential way

Pahlavi Vendidad (۵. ۹. ۳۳) maintains that “in the material world every thing happens according to destiny (pat bakht), whereas in the celestial world everything is according to free action (pat kunishn). This solution of the problem of time is indeed a .consequence of the angelic, emblematical outlook of Mazdaism

Destiny is no more than the visible, terrestrial, getik aspect of its truer transcendent, invisible, naenok prototype, which is freedom. More over, in all this a part is also played by the Ohrmazd…Ahriman dualism, in the sense that Ahriman, through the creation of the seven accursed planets (these are for Mazdaism evil entities, while the fixed stars, and especially the Zodiacal signs are good, and called “the generals of Ohrmazd”), inserts himself into the play, trying to change the temporal destinies of .men and of the world

In this he succeeds, however, only temporarily. And there is still another interesting concept, that of bagho…bakht or portion allotted by the gods (divine destiny),(۲) a “supplement,” as it were, of destiny, added

p: ۱۳۷

.For instance, Menok…i Khrat, Ch. VIII -۱

.Cf. ibid., Ch. XXIV -۲

to that initially established (or, to put it better, added to the terrestrial emblem of transcendent human freedom) in order to recompense specially meritorious actions. "But the gods, we read in the above…mentioned texts, rarely concede that supplement of destiny, and they manifest it only in the celestial world," in order to avoid a possible .destruction of it by Ahrimanic forces, if it is manifested visibly in the getik

We must never forget that transcendent entities can struggle, and win and lose, only .through their incarnation in the visible world

It is, however, obvious that such an approach to the problem of destiny and free…will results in a fatalism even more radical than that reproached by some in the classical .monotheistic religions

This is true especially when we think that some theological schools of Mazdaism, e. g., Zurvanism, maintain that both gods, Ohrmazd and Ahriman, are subject to Time's power of destiny. Time (Zurvan) is regarded as supreme God; and even Ohrmazd(۱) is taken to have created the world "with the approval of Infinite Time" (pat afrin-i .(zaman-i akanark

b) The Apocatastasis … When we consider limited Time to be a detour, a digression) from transcendent Infinite Time, we are able to understand better the idea of the "cosmic cycle" typical of Mazdaism. Reading theological Mazdaic texts one is impressed by a tendency to connect the facts and happenings of the proto…history .with those of the end of the world

The Heroes who will contribute to the creation of the "Future

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.Ibid.. Ch. VIII -۱

Body" (tan…i pasen) are the same Heroes as, at the dawn of existence, were the

.protagonists of the myth of the Beginning

The Saviour, or, better, the three eschatological Saviours are sons of the first Revealer of the Faith, Zarathustra. They are practically Zarathustra himself. To justify the enormous distance in time, there is the myth of Zarathustra's sperm miraculously .preserved in a lake, protected by the fravashis

The beginning is the end. There is, in the limited, serial time, a circle leading it fatally towards Infinite Time. Gayomart, the first Man, the Protoanthrope, will also be the first Resurrected man; the ancient hero Yamshet (Mod. Pers. Jamshid) has already prepared, at the beginnings of history, the mythical Ark (var) to save men from the .terrible trials of the End

Past and Future seem united in an eternal Present, if seen sub specie menok. The Apocatastasis is, transcendentally (menokiha), happening already (and sometimes, .(we find in these theological texts future events told… by verbs in the past

Serial time is like an immense "delay" from metaphysical Time, but there is in it a positive curving towards the Origin. All events of this period of "delay" are eschatologically justified. The ancient victory of Sahm, the Hero, on certain demonic monsters is explained as necessary, because, without it, "it would have been (impossible to fulfil Resurrection and Future Life."(١

It is, however, interesting to remark that the tan…i pasen, the "Future Body" or Future Life, is, though in a transcendent form, a

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.Ibid., Ch. XXVII -١

real body and…at least judging by some texts…the renewed world will not be a mere re…identification with the first stage of the prototypical menok creation, when it was ("without thought, without touch, without movement in a moist stage like semen."(١

On the contrary, the idea of the positivity of time, and that of the presence of an

"Infinite Time" even in Eternity, seems to confer a colour of novelty and true Life to .the new world, prepared by the struggling experience of the embodied creatures

It would be, however, too risky to proceed in these considerations further; for, as mentioned before, the Mazdaic texts too often leave the reader in the expectation of something that never comes. A really theological and philosophical development of .their highly suggestive and interesting intuitions is absent

c) Ethics - We have not to fix our ideas on the chivalrous ethics of the struggle) situated in Time. This struggle, like that of "two men who fight a duel," is a free one, one in which man can always succumb; but just because Time is also an angel, the struggle is coloured with a metaphysical, supreme, "engagement." It transcends everyday's secular ethics. The metaphysico - ethical responsibility of the Mazdean is such that he can pray in the words of the Gatha: "May we be such as those who will (bring about the Transfiguration of the World."(٢

At the same time, however, and for the same reasons, Mazdaic ethics, rooted as it is ,in an objective Time

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.Bund., I -١
.Ft., ٣٠. ٩ -٢

is a heavily heteronomous one. This causes it to be different not only from our modern autonomous ethics; but also from the purely theo-nomous ethics of the classical forms of monotheism. Mazdaic ethics is still strictly connected with semi…mythical realities and with a moral dualism always in danger of transforming .itself into a cosmological dualism

In other words, Good and Evil mean to the Mazdean something more than what they mean to us. There is an entire series of situations and objects (Time is dyed with colour) intrinsically evil, Ahrimanic. We deduce from various passages in Mazdaic Scriptures that not only the nomad is naturally evil, but also the non…Iranian (aneran)

is something objectively evil in comparison with the Iranian; insects and snakes are evil and so on.

The idea that the natural essence (gohr) of certain given beings is radically and metaphysically diabolical is very clear from the texts, and even some characters of history,(۱) such as Alexander the Greek and Frasiyak the Turanian are no more than devilish creatures of Ahriman. The problem of how much did Evil permeate the creation of Ahura Mazdah during the period of "Mixture" has been solved by Mazdeans in a rather heavy, objective, classificatory way.

There have been, however, acute minds that started to meditate on the origin of that Evil which the traditional Mazdaic texts gave as an unexplained presupposition, or rather considered it a fact not needing any explanation. So was born Zurvanism, a theologico-philosophical school, that is considered by some

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۱ - History, as it is obvious from the Mazdean's point of view, becomes the emblematical prelude to Apocatastasis and at the same time the symbol of a transcendent pugilistic prototype.

European Orientalists to be a real autonomous religion.

To solve the problem of the origin of Evil, Mazdaic mind again created a myth: that of the primordial "doubt" of the Time-God (Zurvan), a doubt from which Ahriman was born, as a wicked "twin" of Ohrmazd. This school seems also to have shown a tendency, at least according to recent studies, to unify and symmetrize the two dualisms already mentioned, in the sense that the material world, the realm of the flesh, begins to be identified with the Ahrimanic creation.

This remained only a very vague tendency in Zurvanism, but the identification, quite in the spirit of Gnosticism, was totally accomplished by Manichaeism, in the Iranian texts in which Zurvan is the name of the Supreme God, while Ohrmazd passes to the stage of Protoanthropos. But such identification completely breaks the frame and organism

of Mazdaic thought, that has always considered Manichaeism to be the most .dangerous and most Ahrimanic heresy

Conclusion .۵

We have studied in too rapid and perhaps too unphilosophical a way, the mythical logic, the dualistic and angelical metaphysics, the chivalrous and fatalistic ethics of Mazdaism. It is now necessary to say a word on the importance of this thought for the .development of the subsequent phases of the philosophical history of Iran and Islam

Those who know the strange and highly interesting world of Muslim "heresies" cannot deny that some features of their theological systems strongly remind us of the Mazdaic Weltanschauung. We mean, above all, their curious angelical

p: ۱۴۲

approach to metaphysics, their tendency to recreate a purely "mental" mythology, identifying, e. g., the first intellect or Logos with this or that historical person, or telling, as the Nusairis do, that `Ali is the Ma'na (Supreme Meaning) and Muhammad is the .Ism (Transcendent Name), etc

Professor Corbin demonstrated in his remarkable essays the influence of pre-Islamic Iranian thought on Muslim thinkers like Suhrawardi Maqtul and on Isma'ilism, but his .contempt of history and historical method seems rather exaggerated

It is indeed very difficult to identify the historical channels through which these influences may have penetrated Islam. Many seem, however, to forget that the most important Pahlavi theological texts were written in Muslim Persia in the most flourishing period of Islam and that discussions among Muslims, Christians, Manichaeans, and Mazdeans are documented in the third/ninth century at the Court .of the Caliph al-Mamun

The influences seem to have been mutual, for it has been shown that some Pahlavi texts constant quotations from the Qur'an and mention contemporary Muslim cur- (rents of thought such as that of the Mu'tazilah.(۱

But apart from this direct influence, we could more surely admit another kind of indirect convergence. The late systematic Mazdaic thought was no doubt influenced by late Hellenism and Gnosticism, in the same way as the first Islamic thought was influenced by Hellenism, Sabaeanism, and Gnosticism during the second and .third/eighth and ninth centuries

Hence there resulted, in both the spiritual worlds, a similar functioning that can give the illusion of direct influence, especially

p: ۱۴۳

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۱ - … Their name and their idea of the aslah are mentioned and criticized in Shikand .Gumdnak Vichar, ed. Menasce, pp. ۱۴۶…۴۷

.when similar languages, Pahlavi and modern Persian, are used

If these considerations may seem to discourage the exaggerated enthusiasm of some pan…Iranianists (it is sufficiently known that even ancient Iran had been rather strongly "semitized" by Babylonian and old Syrian influences) they also point to the fact that the organic thought of Mazdaism assumed its truer and deeper historical value just because it did not remain the heritage of a single race or a single people, but, being in itself historically a composite product, synthesized itself with the seeds of the extremely original and rich philosophico…theological value, Islam, that was destined in its turn to spread them in their most mature form throughout the entire .civilized world

Note … The quotations from Avesta and Pahlavic texts are given, modifying here and there some rather contradictory European versions, after comparing them with the original texts. The writer is fully aware of the fact that some of them remain personal .and rather conjectural interpretations

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Chapter ۴: Greek Thought

point

Greek Thought by M.M Sharif

The Early Beginnings

The thinking of the early Greeks, like that of all ancient peoples, Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, Phoenicians, and Indians, was more mythological and speculative, more poetical and theogonical than physical or, metaphysical. It exhibited more the play of imagination than the working of reason. It is true that the basic effort of the Greeks, as of those other peoples, was to understand the origin and nature of things, but, like children, what they understood was a world of their own .make…believe rather than the real world around them

They personified all elements of nature into powerful and immortal divinities, having the same desires, passions, and relationships as themselves, and endowed them with .powers more or less proportionate to their magnitude

The sky, the earth, and the indeterminate space between them, the darkness under the earth, the ocean, river, or water supposed to encircle the earth, thunder and lightning, day and night, air and ether, love and soul, were all divinities respectively named as Ouranos, Gaia, Caos, Erebos, Okeanos, Zeus, Day, Night, Air, Aether, Eros, and Psyche. Similarly, the lowest region below the earth was named Tartaros, the god .of punishment, and the region above that, Hades, the god of the dead

For Homer, all gods originated from Okeanos (water) and his sister and wife, Tethys. For Hesiod, in the beginning there was shapeless indeterminate space (Caos) containing the seeds of all things. From him sprang Night, the mother of sleep and ,subduer of all gods

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and the darkness under Mother Earth (Erebos); and the couple produced Day and the .(upper reaches of space (Aether

Next came into being Mother Earth (Gaia) and love (Eros) the latter of which rules the hearts of gods and men. Mother Earth then gave birth to Heaven (Ouranos) and then by mating with this son, she produced water (Okeanos). For the Orphics, Night was .the first and from her came Heaven and Mother Earth

Though Eros was produced at a very early stage, reproduction was not always the result of mating. For example, in Hesiodic cosmogony Caos produced Night and Erebos, and these two produced Ether and Day, and Gaia gave birth to Portos, either .without mating or without sleeping with their mates

Similarly, in the Orphic account Kronos, the son of Sky (Ouronos), by a deceit as directed by his mother Earth (Gaia) hid himself in a place of ambush and when his father came along with Night and in desiring love spread himself over her, he sheared off his genitals. The drops of blood that fell fertilized Gaia and generated the Furies, Giants, and the Mehan Nymphs, and the blood that fell into the sea produced .(Aphrodite (Venus

This element like many other contents of Greek cosmogony is of pre…Greek origin for its variants are found in the cultures of the Hittites and the Hindus as well. From Kronos all other gods sprang. Zeus (Jupiter), the god of thunder and lightning, was one of his sons from his

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sister and consort Rhea. Apollo the sun…god, who with his horses and chariot sailed in

the golden bowl round the streams of Okeanos, was the son of Zeus from Leto. .Apollo's sister Artemis, the hunting goddess, was the mistress of all wild things

This rough account of the earliest Greek speculation from the dawn of Greek civilization, about ۱۲۰۰ B.C. down to the seventh century B.C., clearly indicates that it concerned itself with (i) the nature of things in the universe, (ii) the nature of gods, and (iii) the origin of the world and the gods. Therefore it can be described to be .cosmological, theological, and cosmogonical. Its language was poetry

Greek Philosophy in the Mainland and the Islands of Asia Minor

Ionic Philosophy

point

It goes to the credit of the philosophers of Miletus, the metropolis of Ionia, a Greek colony in Asia Minor ruled by Persia, to have divested Greek thought of theogony and cosmogony and made the phenomena of nature and their origin their chief concern. Their thought was, however, more physical and cosmological than metaphysical. Each .of them attempted to discover a single basic material from which everything sprang

Thales

The first of this group of thinkers was Thales (b.c. ۶۴۰ B.C.) of Miletus, in Ionia which was a commercially developed Greek colony in Asia Minor and had close contacts with the relatively advanced peoples of Egypt and Babylonia. He was a man of great .practical wisdom and was one of the seven sages of antiquity

He is said to have visited Egypt and brought geometry from there; foretold solstices and an eclipse, presumably

by studying the Babylonian records; measured the height of a pyramid by its shadow; .turned the course of a river; and discovered the constellation Little Bear

According to him, the earth floated on water, magnet had life because it could move iron, water is the origin of all things, and all things are full of gods. How he came to these last two conclusions is not known now, nor was it known in antiquity, but the connection of his doctrine of water with Homeric Okeanos is evident. No one knows if .he set down these ideas in writing, but if he did, no writing of his has survived

Anaximander

The second of these Milesian philosophers was Anaximander, a younger contemporary and disciple of Thales. He and a non…Milesian Pherecydes were the first two Greeks who wrote in prose. For him the first principle from which arose by eternal motion the heavens, the worlds, the divinities that encompass the earth…a cylindrically shaped centre of all these worlds and all other things indeed, is an infinite, .indeterminate, eternal, all…enfolding, and all…controlling stuff

From this indeterminate something are separated off the opposites, dry and moist, warm and cold, and these form nature with its separate elements (air, water, fire, and .earth) and opposite qualities which are held in just balance by time

A sphere of flame formed round the air surrounding the earth, like a bark round a tree, broke off into certain balls, thus forming the sun, the moon, and the stars. All living beings

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arose on the earth by gradual development out of the elementary moisture under the .drying influence of heat. The first living being that appeared thus was a fish

Anaximenes

The third Ionian philosopher of Miletus was Anaximander's disciple Anaximenes. He wrote just one book of which only one complete sentence has survived. The originative substance, according to him, is one, infinite, and not indefinite but definite. .It is air which changes by condensation and rarefaction

In its finest form it is fire; in being made thicker, it becomes wind, then cloud, then water, then earth, and then stones; and the rest, things and gods, come into being from these. Hot and cold are also due to the same processes, the rarefied being hot and the condensed cold. The earth which is flat and round like a plate rides on air. The heaven is a vault that moves round the earth as a cap round the head. The heavenly bodies are fire raised on high, some fixed like nails in the crystalline vault, others ".moving like "fiery leaves

Heraclitus

With another Ionian philosopher, Heraclitus, the problem of philosophy shifted from the nature of substance to that of change. His home was at Ephesus, one of the twelve cities of Ionia famous for their temples. He was in his prime in about ۵۰۰ B.C. He is said to have written one book covering all knowledge, metaphysical, scientific, and .political, and that in a style unparalleled in its brevity and difficulty of interpretation

This difficulty is embodied

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in a story that Euripides lent this book to Socrates who, when asked what he thought of it, replied, "Splendid what I have understood; also, I believe, what I have not understood…except that it needs a Dehan diver." Of this book only ۱۳۹ fragments have survived out of which ۱۳ are said to be doubtful and spurious. His influence in the .history of philosophy cannot be over…estimated

According to him, while things remain the same, they are yet not the same; they constantly change. In the same river we both step and do not step, for those who step in the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them. Thus, it is not possible to step twice in the same river or touch the same material substance twice. There is a perpetual change, a perpetual becoming in which being and not…being are .harmonized even God changes

The universe of change is eternal and everlasting. It is made by no man or god. Its

basic substance is fire, which also steers all the changes according to law. There is an exchange…all things for fire and fire for all things, like goods for gold and gold for .goods

There is a Law of the universe that is common to all. It is the Law divine and nourishes all other laws. Though all things come into being according to this Law, most men are always incapable of understanding it. The soul has its own law which consists in growing according to the nature of its

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own seed. Everything issues from and goes back to the basic substance, fire, .according to the law of necessity

Fire kindles in measure and is quenched in measure. The sun will not transgress its .measure; otherwise the Furies, ministers of Justice, will find him out

Everything comes about also by way of strife, strife between opposites, between cold and hot, dry and wet. We are fundamentally the same whether we are alive or dead, awake or asleep, for the latter of each pair of opposites, having changed by strife, becomes the former and this again having changed becomes the latter. To souls it is death to become water, to water it is death to become earth. From earth comes water and from water soul. Water lives the death of air, air the death of fire, fire the .death of earth, and earth the death of water

That which differs with itself is in agreement: whatever is in opposition is in concert. From opposing tensions like that of the bow and the lyre arises the most beautiful harmony. God (Zeus) is day…night, winter…summer, warpeace, satiety…famine. He changes like fire which when mingled with smoke of incense is named according to .each man's pleasure. He alone is wise

Our knowledge is relative. Everything is known by its opposite. Disease makes health pleasant and good, hunger satisfaction, weariness rest. People would not know; right if they did not know wrong. Moderation is the greatest virtue and wisdom is to speak

the truth and to act according to

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nature. A dry soul is the wisest and best. Character, for man, is destiny. Absolute truth .is known only to God for whom all things are beautiful, good, and just

Heraclitus physics follows from his metaphysics. Fire is the basic material substance from which all things come and into which all things go, and this cycle of creation and destruction goes on for ever. Earth rarefied becomes water and water rarefied partly remains moist and partly gets akin to fire, and by this process the bright fiery parts become the stars, sun, and moon, and the darker parts, being near earth, form the fiery bodies that shine less brightly. The size of the sun is equal to the breadth of a .man's foot

Greek Philosophy in South Italy and Sicily

point

In about ۵۳۰ B.C. another centre of Greek speculation arose, and the problem of philosophy shifted from the nature of substance and change to the form and relation of things and permanence. Pythagoras of Samos, an Ionian island in the Aegean Sea off the west coast of Asia Minor, settled down in South Italy at Crotona, a Greek colony, where he formed a society with aims at once political, philosophical, and religious. Xenophanes, an Ionian thinker, who was in the prime of life in ۵۳۰ B.C., migrated to Elea, a Greek settlement in South Italy. He and his pupil, Parmenides, and .grand pupil, Zeno, formed what is generally known as the Eleatic school

Pythagoras .۱

,Pythagoras was in the prime of life in ۵۳۰ B.C. No written work was left by him

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but there are references to him in Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, and others. All teaching was done by him by word of mouth, because one of the rules

imposed upon the members of the brotherhood founded by him…a rule equally binding on the master and the disciples…was that of secrecy, betrayal being punishable by .excommunication

He is said to have visited Egypt and Babylon where he learnt the mathematical and religio…mystical elements of his philosophy. One of his chief doctrines was transmigration of the soul. His system had an element of asceticism based on taboos prohibiting the eating of beans, killing some kinds of animals for sacrifice and food, .and wearing of woollen clothes at religious ceremonies

The school did a mass of work in mathematics, the mechanics of sound, and geometrical theorems, but it is difficult to say how much of this work went to Pythagoras himself. According to him, Number was the First Principle and numbers and their relationships were the essence of all things. This idea made the Pythagoreans base their philosophy on mathematics. The original number was Monad, the Principle of Oneness, which was equated to Limit. They developed a .dualistic cosmology founded on the pairs of opposites

These are One…Two (Monad…Dyad), One being the principle of Limit imposing itself upon Two, the principle of the Unlimited ever…existing Void (empty space Tuade of air or vapour), Odd…Even, One…Many, Right…Left, Male…Female, Rest-Motion, Straight…Curved, Light…Darkness, Good…Bad, and Square…Oblong. Things came into existence by the opposition of the Limiting and

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.the Unlimited and their harmony

From the Monad, the One or the Limiting, and the Dyad, the Unlimited, came the numbers and their relations, from the numbers came the points, from the points lines, from lines planes, from planes solids, and from solids the perceptible elements, fire, .water, earth, air, each consisting of particles or atoms of different shapes

The One by working from within outward created all shapes and by the reverse

process of drawing the Unlimited inward created the earth, the counter…earth, a body revolving once a day between the earth and the central fire, the planets, the sun, the moon, the stars, and everything they contained. Everything has a number, the central fire one, the earth two, the sun seven, and so on. Even immaterial substances like the soul and abstract qualities such as justice, courage, right, motion, etc., were assigned .numbers

The school very early saw the relations between the notes of the Octave and the length of the string and designated them as symphonies. The heavens are in harmony and in their motion, they make music which Pythagoras alone was said to be able to .hear

The Eleatic School .۲

Xenopanes … The founder of the Eleatic school, Xenophanes, was a contemporary of Pythagoras. He was in the prime of his life in about ۵۳۰ B.C. He condemned Homer and Hesiod for attributing to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach to .mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception

There is, according to him, one God among gods and

men, the greatest, and He is not at all like mortals in body and mind. He remains permanently the same, not moving and undergoing change; and without toil He sets .everything in motion, by the power of His thought

Complete knowledge of gods, men, and things is impossible. No man has ever seen certain truth, nor will anyone ever see it. Whatever we can know, we know after long .seeking

Everything comes from earth and goes back to earth at last. Water also contributes to the being and growth of things. The sea is the source of clouds, winds, and rivers, and .the sun moves about the earth and gives it warmth

Parmenides … Parmenides of Elea was a contemporary of Heraclitus and about twenty…five years his junior in age. He was Xenophanes disciple and, had also a Pythagorean as his teacher. His philosophy like that of his pupil Zeno's was a reaction against the philosophy of Heraclitus. He took up Xenophanes idea of permanence and .developed it by the help of rigorous logic

He gave expression to his thought in a poem addressed to his disciple, Zeno, who was his junior by about twenty…five years. In the prologue of this poem he allegorically relates how in the chariot of the senses, of which the wheels were the ears and steeds the eyes, he was carried to the place of the goddess Night and she revealed to .him the way of truth and the way of opinion

In the way of truth, he is

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told what reason (Logos) can think, exists; what it cannot think, does not exist. It is not thinkable that what…is…not is. Not-Being, therefore, does not exist and being alone exists. If being alone is, it follows that it does not come into being, for if it did, it would have to come from something which is Not…Being; but from Not-Being it could not .come, for Not…Being does not exist

There being nothing besides it, nothing could bring it into being at one time rather than at another. It is therefore ever present. For it, there is no before and after. It is permanent and eternally continuous. As there is nothing besides it to bring it into .being, there is nothing besides it to destroy it

It is one indivisible whole, for there is no Non…Being to lie between its parts. It is all alike. It is also motionless, for there is nothing besides it to move it and there is nothing in which it can move. It is limited, but why it is so is not explained. There being no Not…Being to stop it, it cannot be more or less in any direction. It is therefore a .well…rounded sphere, complete on all sides

The way of opinion is the way of untruth and false belief. The goddess shows it to him

to enable him to guard himself against it. The beliefs mentioned in this connection as false are: the opposites of Light and Darkness are the First Causes; to be and

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not to...be are the same; for everything there is a way of opposing stress; the moon shines with light borrowed from the sun; the sun and the moon were separated from the milky way; the earth is rooted in water...beliefs which were held by some of his .predecessors and contemporaries

Parmenides speculation involved four basic canons: (۱) that Being not having sprung from Not...Being was itself ultimate, (۲) that Void, being nonexistent, could not be, (۳) that plurality could not come out of the primal Unity, (۴) nor could motion and change. These canons were generally regarded as the last word on philosophy till the time of .Plato who was the first to expose their fallacies

Zeno – Zeno of Elea wrote a book called Attacks in defence of Parmenides theory of Being as One, indivisible, and permanent. His method was to take the opposite view and reduce it to absurdity by showing that it led to contradictory conclusions. This .method, of which he himself was the originator, is called reductio ad absurdum

He first took up the proposition: Things are many, and then showed that they must be both finite and infinite. If they are many, they must be of a number; they are neither more nor less. If they are neither more nor less, they are finite. Again, if they are many, they must, on the other hand, be infinite, for there are always other things in .between them, and again others between these and so on ad infinitum

If things are

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many, they must be either without magnitude or with magnitude. If without magnitude, then if a thing is added to another thing there would be no addition in magnitude. The unit added is, therefore, infinitely small, as small as nothing. If anything has magnitude, it follows that part of it must also have magnitude and so the

part preceding it, and the part that precedes the preceding one and so on ad infinitum. .Therefore… it must be in finitely large

If a thing moves, it is neither in the place in which it is, nor in that in which it is not, but either alternative is impossible. If a thing is in a place, it is at rest. Nor can anything .happen to a thing in a place where it is not

If everything is in space, space is either something or nothing. If space is something, then space is itself in something and that something in something else and so on ad .infinitum

Zeno argued similarly against motion. In this connection he advanced four arguments: (١) You cannot traverse a given length, for to traverse it you must reach the half…way position and then the half…way position of the remaining half, and so on ad infinitum. Again, motion is impossible because it is impossible to pass through infinite positions in finite time. (٢) If the tortoise is given a start, Achilles cannot catch up with it, for while he runs that distance, the tortoise will have got further, and so on ad

.infinitum

If you shoot an arrow at a target, it cannot reach the target, because it has to pass (٣) through an infinite number of positions and that cannot be done in finite time. (۴) Sup… pose there are three sets of solids A, B, and C: A at rest, B moving in one direction, and C moving in the opposite direction at equal speeds. Solids in B and C would pass one another twice as quickly as they pass those in A. Therefore equal speeds are at .unequal speeds which is absurd

These dilemmas of Zeno have puzzled the philosophers all through the ages, but the real, solution has been found only in the physico…mathematical developments of .modern times

Melissus … Melissus of Samos was younger than Zeno by about ten years. He did not actually live in Elea or any other Greek part of South Italy, yet he belonged to the

Eleatic school, because he accepted most of the views of Parmenides. He wrote a poem On Being some fragments of which have survived. According to him, Being or the One cannot come into being, and change, move, have pain or any multiplicity or .divisibility

If Being had a beginning, it would have been from Not…Being, but nothing can come out of Not…Being. If Being had no beginning, it cannot have an end, for if nothing can come out of Not…Being, nothing can go into Not…Being. Therefore, Being has been from eternity and is everlasting. There is no creation and no

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destruction. Being is also infinite in magnitude, for if limited, it must be limited by .Not…Being which is impossible

In Being there is no change, for if Being altered, then what was before must have passed away or become Not…Being and what was not before, i.e., Not…Being, must have come into being which both are impossible. Therefore there is no rarefaction and no condensation. Being cannot move, for there is no Void for it to move into. Being cannot feel pain, for pain is felt through the addition or subtraction of something, i.e., .by not remaining the same, but Being always remains the same

Empedocles .۳

Empedocles of Acragas, a town in Sicily and capital of the south…western province of Italy, was a contemporary of Zeno and of the same age as he. He wrote two poems entitled On Nature and Purifications. Like Melissus, he was deeply influenced by Parmenites. Agreeing with Parmenides that Being could not come out of Not…Being, that plurality, divisibility, change, and motion could not spring from Absolute Unity, and that there was no Void, he explained plurality, divisibility, change, and motion by .denying the Original Absolute Unity

The original undifferentiated whole, according to him, consisted of four eternally existing elements…fire, air, earth, and water…leaving no Void. Each of the elements is underived and indestructible and of a specific nature. From these elements come all

things that were, are, and will be. Change is a mere rearrangement and reshuffling of these elements. It arises from motion and motion cannot

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.arise from Absolute Being

To explain motion he postulated two motive powers, Love and Strife, existing from eternity along with the four elements and having infinite power. He held that there is no absolute generation or absolute decay. What are called creation and destruction are really commingling and separation of the elements, the former being the work of .Love and the latter of Strife

Existence passes through three stages. In the first stage Love alone was active and the elements were mingled together forming one all…inclusive Whole…a Whole which had no feet, no knees, and no genitals, but was a sphere equal to himself from all sides. The middle stage was the one in which Love and Strife were both active, but .Strife gradually gained the upper hand

In this stage the elements became separated from the Whole. The first to separate was air that flowed around in a circle and took up the position surrounding the world, and its outermost margin solidified itself to form the firmament. It was followed by fire which ran upwards under the solidified periphery round the air and displaced the .air of the upper half. Fire was followed by earth and earth by water

By further commingling appeared solitary limbs, foreheads, eyes, breasts, arms, feet, etc., wandering about and seeking for union. When Love and Strife more or less mingled together, by their action there was a mingling of these limbs into chance combinations forming monsters and deformed organisms, like creatures having faces and breasts

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.on both sides, cattle with the fronts of men, and men with the heads of cattle

Later, those things which were accidentally well fitted to one another survived; the rest disappeared. Those things are most suitable for coming…together which are .made like one another. It is these which are united by Love

Those things which differ most from one another in their origin, mixture, and form are made so by Strife and are very baneful. At the next stage gradually appeared "Whole…natured forms" first plants, then gradually fish, birds, wild animals, men, and .even gods who are the highest in honour and people said things had come into being

As the process of separation under the influence of Strife continued, the sexes were distinguished. When Love is completely inactive and Strife alone is operative, the last stage of extreme separation is reached and individual things disappear, and men not .knowing the truth call this their death

This stage of extreme separation is followed by a period when Love regains its ascendancy and reunites the separate elements, and individual things reappear. But when Love alone rules and Strife is inactive, these things again disappear and the original stage of one all…indusive Unity is re…established. This cycle of One changing .into many and many changing into One is endlessly repeated as appointed by Fate

In Purifications, Empedocles deals with the relation of man to the universe. He identifies the soul with fire. The soul first existed mingled in the original undifferentiated Whole (God). Then

Strife detached it from the Whole. It passes through the stages of plants, wild animals, and men and then, if purified by fasting and continent living, it is taken back .by Love to the original Whole and becomes one with God

In man all the elements, air, fire, earth, water, and Love and Strife are present; and since like perceive like, he can perceive all the elements in the surrounding world .through the senses. His blood also contains all the elements

His thought…consciousness resides chiefly in the blood round the heart. All things give

off effluences and when the effluences of two bodies are of the right size to fit into the pores of their respective organs, sensation of the one in the other takes place. All .sense…organs are equally reliable, and it is a mistake not to trust sense…experience

Thus, to Empedocles goes the credit of basing knowledge on experience and recognizing observation expressly as a method of inquiry. Some of his cosmological, .botanical, and embryological findings are remarkable

The sun, according to him, is not in its nature fire, but rather a reflection of fire like that which comes from water. It is collected in a ball which travels round the great sky. The moon, which is composed of air shut in by fire and solidified like hail, gets its light from the sun. When in her movement round the earth, the moon comes below the sun, she cuts off its rays, and shadow is thrown as much on the

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earth as the breadth of the moon. The earth makes

night by coming in the way of the sun's rays. The earth is stable in the midst of .revolving heavens, like water in a revolving bowl

Plants are living things and they combine both sexes in One. The substance of the child's limbs is divided between the parents, and the child resembles whichever of the parents has contributed most. All things inhale and exhale. There are bloodless channels in the flesh of them all, stretched over their bodies surface, and at the mouths of these channels the outermost surface of the skin is pierced right through with many a pore, so that blood is kept in, but an easy path is cut for the air to pass .through

Greek Philosophy back to Asia Minor

Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia .۱

Anaxagoras … Anaxagoras was a contemporary of Zeno and Empedocles, about ten years older than both. At the age of twenty he migrated to Athens and stayed there

for thirty years and, being prosecuted for impiety because he maintained that the sun was a red…hot mass of metal, he withdrew to Lampsacus in Asia Minor where he died .in about ۴۰۸ B.C

He was an associate of Anaximenes and Protagoras and teacher of Euripides and Pericles by the latter of whom he was defended in his prosecution which resulted, according to some, to a fine and his exile and, according to others, to condemnation to death in his absence. He wrote only one book some fragments of which are still .extant

Anaxagoras could not see how

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Empedocles drew an infinite variety of things from only four elements and two motive forces, Love and Strife. He, therefore, postulated that the first undifferentiated whole contained mixed together all the opposites of Anaximander, Heraclitus, and the Pythagoreans, all the four elements of Empedoeles, and, besides, seeds, infinite in number and smallness and in every respect different from one another, of all things .that were ultimately to emerge

For explaining the separation of things and their growth from their seeds he substituted Empedocles motive forces of Love and Strife by the single intellectual motive force of Mind. Mind is infinite, all alike, self…ruled, and all alone by itself. Though it is mixed with nothing, it is none the less present where everything else is, whether .as mixed or separated off

If it were mixed with things, they would have limited it from controlling everything the way it does. Mind has knowledge of all things, mixed and separated, past, present, and future; has the greatest power; controls everything that has life; and sets everything in order, including the rotation of the air, aether, the sun, and the moon. It .is the finest and the purest of all that is

He agreed with Parmenides and Empedocles that nothing can come out of nothing. As

the seeds of all things are present in the Original Whole, nothing new comes into .existence. Nor is anything destroyed. Change means only mixture and separation

He held that all things are infinitely great and infinitely small…infinitely great because they

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contain an infinite number of parts, and infinitely small because even the smallest of .parts is infinitely divisible into smaller and still smaller parts

His cosmogonical findings were as follows. The blind imparted at first a rotary movement to the mixed Whole (Caos) and this movement caused the separation of all bodies in the Cosmos. The first things to emerge were air and aether the latter of which he identified with fire. The dense was then separated off from the rare, the hot from the cold, the bright from the dark, and the dry from the moist, the light, hot, and dry bodies occupying the upper position and the dense, moist, cold, and dark taking .the lower position where the earth is

But nothing was completely separated off from the other except Mind. Air is solidified into cloud, cloud into water, water into earth, and earth into stones under the agency of cold. The sun, the moon, and all the stars are red…hot stones which the rotation of the aether carried round it. The heat of the stars is not felt by us because they are far .from us

The moon is beneath the sun and nearer to us. She has no light of her own but derives it from the sun. The stars in their revolution pass beneath the earth. The eclipse of the moon is due to its being screened by the earth, and that of the sun to its being .screened by the moon when it is new

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.The moon is made of earth and has plains and ravines on it

The earth is flat and stays suspended where it is because of its size, because there is

no void, and because the air keeps it afloat. Rivers owe their origin partly to rain and partly to the waters under the earth which is hollow and in its hollow contains water. The reflection of the sun in the clouds forms the rainbow. The moisture of the cloud .either creates a wind or spills forth rain

First after separation air contained the seeds of all things and those seeds, when carried down by the rain, gave rise to plants. Animals first arose from moisture and then from one another. All living things, plants at the bottom and man at the top, have a portion of Mind. Anaxagoras formulated two principles which enabled him to .propound his theory of nourishment and growth

These principles are: (۱) that a portion of everything is in everything(۱) and (۲) that things alike attract one another. Things that are eaten already contain the ingredients .which are produced in an organism, e. g., blood, sinews, bones, flesh, and so on

These ingredients reason alone can know. Those seeds in which blood predominates proceed, by the attraction of like to like, to join the blood of the body, and those in which flesh predominates proceed by the same principle to join the bodily flesh. The .same holds true of all other parts

,Diogenes of Apollonia … Diogenes of Apollonia

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۱ - Rather inconsistently he also holds that natural substances consist solely of parts .which are like the whole and like one another

a town in Asia Minor or Crete, lived in the later half of the fifth century B.C. He was an eclectic thinker chiefly influenced by Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, and Heraclitus. He first laid down two principles, one with regard to energy, the other to the language used. He said, one must begin one's investigation with something incontrovertible and one's .expression should be simple and dignified

Well within the Milesian tradition he held that all things must be modifications of one

basic substance, for if they were different in nature and were not fundamentally the same, they could neither mix with one another, nor influence one another favourably or adversely, nor could one thing grow out of another. This basic substance for him as .for Anaximenes is air which is infinite and eternal and generative of the worlds

From its condensation and rarefaction…guided by its purposive intelligence…all things come into being and become of different kinds at different times, and to it they return. Air is, in short, God who has power over, steers, inheres in, and disposes all things. It is .the soul of all living things, for when they cease breathing, they die

It is air that creates all sensations. When air is mixed with blood, it lightens it and, penetrating the body through and through, produces pleasure. When it does not mix with blood, the blood gets thicker and coagulates, then pain results. Diogenes also .gave quite an acute account of the anatomy of veins

The Atomists .۲

Lucippus

Lucippus who belonged to Miletus

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in Asia Minor was in his prime of life in ۴۳۰ B.C. He was a pupil of Zeno and is said to have associated with Parmenides, though their philosophies were poles apart. He evolved the theory of atoms which was accepted and further refined by Democritus, who belonged either to Miletus, or according to some accounts to Abdera, and was in the prime of his life in ۴۲۰ B.C. Democritus had met Lucippus and perhaps also .Anaxagoras to whom he was junior by about forty years

He visited Egypt, Chaldaea, Persia, some say even India and Ethiopia. He was a prolific writer, though nothing of his works has survived except about ۲۹۰ fragments .mostly from his ethical writings

Democritus

In Democritus the scientific spirit of Ionia found its culmination. His theory became the basis of all subsequent materialism right down to the present day. The Atomists made their theory explain our experience of the coming…into…being, perishing, and motion of things and their multiplicity; and this they did by postulating, against the Eleatics, the .existence of Void, a Not…Being which nevertheless exists as much as Being

Both Being and Void or Not…Being are the material causes of all existing things. Being is not one, but consists of invisible, small atoms of infinite number and shapes. The atoms are to be regarded of infinite shapes, because there is no reason why an atom .should be of one shape rather than another

,They are indivisible because they are very small. They are compact and full

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because there is no Void within them. They move in the Void, and by coming together they effect coming…into…being, and by their separation, perishing. They differ from one another not in quality but in shape, arrangement, and position and, according to Aristotle's reading, also in weight. These differences are responsible for all the .qualitative differences in objects

The whole of existence is infinite; a part of it is filled with atoms and a Part is Void. A large number of atoms of different shapes move in the infinite Void. They come together there like to like and produce, in the same way as the Mind of Anaxagoras, a whirl in which colliding with one another and revolving in all manner of ways, they .begin to separate, like to like

But when their multitude prevents them from rotating any longer in equilibrium, those that are fine go out towards the surrounding Void, while the rest get entangled, abide .together, unite their motions, and make the first spherical structure

Thus the earth came into, being when the bulkier atoms stayed together. It is flat but tilted downward towards the south. Some of these bodies that get entangled form a structure that is first moist and muddy but as they revolve with the whirl of the whole

they dry out and then ignite to form the substance of the heavenly bodies. Thus arise innumerable worlds which differ in size and are resolved again into atoms.

In some worlds there are no sun and moon, in

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some they are larger than those in our world and in others more numerous. The intervals between the worlds are unequal, in some parts there are more worlds, in others fewer, some are increasing, some at their height, some decreasing, in some parts they are arising, in others falling. They are destroyed by collision with one another. Some worlds are devoid of living creatures or plants or any moisture.

In compound bodies the lighter is one that contains more Void, the heavier that which contains less. The soul consists of spherical atoms spread through the body. We inhale and exhale soul..atoms, and life continues so long as this process goes on.

All objects animate or inanimate flock together with their kind, dove with dove, crane with crane, and pebbles with pebbles on the seashore.

The process by which the worlds come into existence and everything moves is not random. Nothing occurs at random; every change in existence is for a reason and only by necessity.

According to the Atomists, knowledge is of two forms, genuine and obscure, sensuous knowledge being of the latter type. They explain sensation by a kind of effluence that is said to proceed from everything. In the case of sight it proceeds both from the object seen and the observer's eye and produces an impression on the air, the solid part of which remains outside but the finer and lighter part, the image, enters the pupil of the eye if the eye also throws out a like image.

Other sensations

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are explained by the size and shape of the atoms. Sensible qualities being the result of

this process show how things affect us, not what they are. As later on held by Locke, shape, arrangement, size, and weight are the qualities of things, and are therefore .objective, but colour, sound, taste, smell, etc., are subjective

The ethical fragments of Democritus which have come down to us in the form of aphorisms are mostly sparkling jewels of wisdom and common sense. According to him, happiness is the highest good. In theology he believed in the existence of gods, but the gods, he holds, are made of atoms and are as material and mortal as men. Only they live longer and have greater power and higher reason. They do not .interfere in men's affairs and, therefore, need not be feared

Philosophy at Athens

Early Record .۱

So far all philosophical development took place in Greek settlements in the islands and the mainland of Asia Minor which were under the imperial rule of Persia and in Magna Graecia (the Greek cities of South Italy and Sicily). Before the beginning of the fifth century B.C. Athens had not produced a single great man in the spheres of art, .science, literature, and philosophy except the lawgiver Solon

Archelaus (c. ۴۵۰ B.C.) did belong to Athens but he was a minor thinker who followed the principles of Anaxagoras with some modifications based on Anaximander's primacy of hot and cold, Anaximenes condensation and rarefaction of air, and Empedocles four elements. His chief claim to a

place in the history of Greek philosophy is that he was a pupil of Anagagoras and .teacher of Socrates

However, the victory of Athens against the Persian King Darius in ۴۹۰ B.C. and of the combined Greek navies under Athenian leadership against his son Xerxes in ۴۸۰ B.C. brought Athens politically to the forefront. Political predominance brought with it .flourishing trade and commerce which resulted in great prosperity

During Pericles wise rule of thirty years from ۴۶۰ to ۴۳۰ B.C. Athens was at the height of her glory. It was during this period that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides produced their tragedies, Aristophanes his comedies, and Pheidias his statues…all masterpieces of unsurpassed beauty. Herodotus by writing the history of the Persian wars became the father of history and Thucydides by producing his History of the Peloponnesian .War secured for himself the rank of the greatest historian of antiquity

In philosophy, however, the record of Athens up to the end of the fifth century was far from brilliant. She produced only one great philosopher. Socrates, and suffered another from Asia Minor, Anaxagoras, to live and teach there. But her people by bringing up the charge of impiety and corruption of the Athenian youth against them condemned the former to death and the latter, despite Pericles defence to banishment for life. Besides, it was here that the sceptical movement started by the Sophists brought philosophy, partly justly and partly unjustly, under the shadow of .disrepute

The Sophists .۲

The Problem of Knowledge and the Study of Man

While great but

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conflicting philosophical systems were being developed with almost equal force by the Asian Greeks in the islands and the mainland of Asia Minor, and the Western Greeks in South Italy and Sicily, by about ۴۵۰ B.C. dissatisfaction began to appear with .system…building in a certain section of talented men

The paradoxical conclusion of these systems made this group of thinkers sceptical about philosophy as a truth…finding discipline. The leader of this group was Protagoras of Abdera in Thrace who was at the prime of his life in the later half of the fifth century B.C. He was a friend of Pericles and used to teach in Athens. He doubted the existence of gods and, therefore, like Anaxagoras, was banished from Athens on a charge of .impiety. In addition, his books were burnt in the market…place

According to Protagoras, we experience neither the ultimate principles of the schools of Ionia or the First Cause of the school of Elea, nor the “atoms” of Democritus or the “seeds” of Anaxagoras. At best they are unverifiable hypotheses. Therefore, all talk about them is idle. Instead of wasting energy on discussion regarding the nature of .the objective world a man should occupy himself with himself

All knowledge, for what it is worth, depends upon the senses. But our sense…experience is deceptive. It reveals only what passes away and yields no universal truth. Nor can we rely on reason, for reason is also based on sense…experience and is a mere continuation of it. As all knowledge

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is based on a man's sensations, it is true only for him, and not for all. A proposition may at the same time be both true and false, true for one, false for others. There ”.being no absolute truth, each “man” as an individual “is the measure of all things

Ethical truths are equally relative. What is of benefit to me may harm another, and thus what is good for one may be bad for others. The individual’s good is only what he considers good for himself. With everyone personal benefit alone should count. Although one opinion cannot be truer than another, it can yet be better than another. As sensuous knowledge, however uncertain, is alone possible for us, it should be acquired for use in practical life. Similarly, it is not known whether the gods exist or .not; they should nevertheless be worshipped

Protagoras only doubted the possibility of certain knowledge, but his contemporary Gorgias went to the extent of maintaining that nothing whatever exists and if .anything exists, it is not knowable and if it is knowable, it is not communicable

Following these leaders all Sophists became sceptical about the universality and objectivity of truth itself and began to concern themselves mainly with teaching the practical arts of arguing and speaking with effect for success in public life, and receiving payment in return. The subjects they taught with this end in view were logic, .rhetorics, and grammar

As there was no regular system of education only the sons of aristocracy could

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afford to take lessons from them. They were hated by the masses because of their relations with aristocracy and their radicalism in matters of religious beliefs, and by the philosophers of other schools because, against the prevailing practice, they charged fees for giving instruction. They were called by their opponents the Sophists.

Though the word "sophist" means a wise or learned man, it was used for them as a term of reproach to mean a quibbler who used fallacious arguments to make truth appear falsehood and falsehood truth, and argued not to find the truth but only to win a point against a disputant. This reproach was definitely justified, at least in the case of the later Sophists.

From the purely philosophical point of view, the sceptical movement of the Sophists was not an unmixed evil. It was quite a natural movement and of positive gain in two ways. A period of feverish intellectual activity resulting in great systems is naturally followed by a period of criticism…a criticism which paves the way for further developments. The critical scepticism of the Sophists led to the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle who represented the highest point that Greek speculation could reach.

There was another gain. The main problems to which the system…builders paid attention were the problems of Being and Not…Being, substance and number, permanence and change, One and many and man did not figure in the picture at all. The Sophists made the study of man, as an individual and as a

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member of the State, their chief concern. This turn in Greek speculation widened the horizon and partly determined the course of subsequent Greek thought.

۳. Socrates

Socrates was born at Athens in ۴۶۹ or ۴۷۰ B.C. and was condemned to death in ۳۹۹ B.C. .He spent most of his time in high philosophical discussions in public places

In the case of Socrates," says Bertrand Russell, "the uncertainty is as to whether we" know very little or a great deal."(۱) The reason is that for his teaching he used the method of conversation and wrote no book. All our knowledge of him is based on the writings of his pupils, Xenophon, a soldier whose philosophical equipment was not high enough to enable him fully to appreciate his teacher's ideas, and Plato who idealized him and made him the chief character of his Dialogues, but left no hint to the extent to which the contents of the Dialogues relate to his own ideas and to what .extent to those of Socrates

Socrates was the greatest thinker of his generation. He was highminded, eminently pious, frank to a fault, amazingly indifferent to worldly success and comforts of life, and remarkably high in the estimation of youth. Physically, he was extremely ugly and .went about shabbily dressed and barefoot

Although he never took any fees for his teaching and was opposed to the Sophistic way of thinking, he was sometimes mistaken for a Sophist. This was due to the fact ,that, like the Sophists, he discarded metaphysics, natural science

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.Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy, p. ۱۰۲ -۱

and mathematics, made the study of man as a citizen his main concern, and regarded the individual's culture as the goal of education, irrespective of its effect on State, .religion, and traditional beliefs

Socrates believed in God, immortality of the soul, and, for the noble and the great, a happy life after death. He was religious to the extent of being superstitious, for he went to the Delphic Oracle to find out who was the wisest man in Athens. The Oracle's reply that it was he himself came to him as a complete surprise, for, he thought, a god could not be wrong, and yet he who knew nothing had been declared to be the wisest

.man

To see that there was no error he visited all the men reputed for great wisdom, engaged them in discussion only to be disappointed and to discover that the Oracle was right, because those who claimed knowledge actually knew nothing, while he .who claimed no knowledge knew at least one truth, the truth that he knew nothing

He also claimed that ever since his childhood he had heard a divine voice that always told him what not to do and that he was commissioned by God to fulfil the .philosopher's mission by searching into himself and other men

In spite of his religious_mindedness and his ennobling influence on the youth, he was prosecuted for denying the gods of the State, worshipping new divinities, and corrupting the young, and was in the end condemned to death

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.by poison

Socrates used and developed the Dialectical Method invented by Zeno. It is the method of seeking knowledge through the clarification of ideas by questions and answers. It is a useful method for discovering logical inconsistencies in order to reach what is logically consistent. It is suitable for the clarification and definition of non_empirical ideas and the right usage of words, but, as Bertrand Russell says, is of (no use in the discovery of new facts.(۱

He was interested neither in physical nor in mathematical or metaphysical speculation. His interest lay mainly in ethics, of which he is rightly said to be the .founder

Opinions greatly differ in moral matters, but for Socrates it is the philosopher's duty to dig out the eternal and universal truths hidden beneath the confused mass of opinion. Beginning with real or professed ignorance (his irony) and making self_consistency as the criterion of truth, he brought under discussion opinions about such matters as good, beauty, ugliness, nobility, wisdom, justice, courage, friendship, State, and

citizenship, in order to know their real moral significance and to arrive at their precise .definitions

He was convinced that all evil…doing is due to ignorance. If people knew what was right, they would do no wrong. As knowledge alone is needed to make people virtuous, he declared that knowledge is virtue. It is the highest good and the sole end .of life and its pursuit is the only source of abiding happiness

By over…emphasizing one aspect or another of Socrates system, his followers developed

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.Ibid., p. ۱۱۳ -۱

divergent lines of thought. The school of the Cyrenaics, founded by Aristippus of Cyrene, lay hold of his idea of happiness and joy in the pursuit of knowledge, and made the greatest amount of pleasure the highest good for man, a view later on .taken and modified by the Epicureans

His emphasis on knowledge as virtue, as the supreme good worthy of being sought for its own sake, irrespective of the joy that it brings, made the school of the Cynics, established by Antisthenes, couple their doctrine of virtue and duty with asceticism, i.e., with extreme self…restraint, self…renunciation, and freedom from want a doctrine later on developed by the Stoics. Euclides and Plato combined his idea of the highest good with the Eleatic conception of the unity of Being and developed the doctrine that matter and change and motion are unreal, and the one ultimate Being…the Good…is .the essence of all things

Plato .۴

Plato (۴۲۷…۳۴۷ B.C.) was a descendant of Solon from his mother's side and, if his father's claim is accepted of the last kings of Athens from the father's side. He was a disciple of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle. He remained attached to the Socratic circle from his own age of twenty to the death of Socrates. His works were

exceedingly well preserved. Out of these, twenty–six authentic Dialogues have come .clown to us

At the age of forty or forty–one he founded an educational institution known as the Academy, where he taught till his death at the

age of eighty. The Academy flourished till ۵۲۹ A. D. when, ۹۲۶ years after its inception, Justinian, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, which had been converted to Christianity nearly two centuries before, closed it "because of his religious bigotry" and brought Greek philosophy officially to an end "and the Dark Ages descended upon (Europe."(۱

After more than half a century of sceptical criticism, Greek thought went back to system–building and produced two of the most comprehensive and integrated systems the world has ever seen. Of these Plato's was one and the other was that of his disciple, Aristotle. The fundamentals of Plato's system are the same in all his Dialogues, but, owing to development of his thought, the details differ from Dialogue to Dialogue. An exceedingly well–written passage in Frank Thilly's History of Philosophy brings out very clearly Plato's relations to his predecessors. It runs as follows

Within the framework of the Platonic system, we have a combination and" transformation of the teachings of the leaders of Greek thought. With the Sophists, Plato agrees that knowledge–if knowledge be restricted to appearances–is impossible; with Socrates, that genuine knowledge is always by concepts; with Heraclitus, that the world is in constant change (sensuous appearances are characterized by change); with the Eleatics, that the real world for Plato the world of ideas–is unchangeable; with the atomists, that being is manifold (Plato admits a plurality of ideas); with the Eleatics, that it is one (the form of the Good is a unity): with nearly

Ibid., p. ۸۰ -۱

all the Greek thinkers, that it is basically rational; with Anaxagoras, that mind rules it and that mind is distinct from matter. His system is the mature fruit of the history of Greek philosophy down to his time."(۱)

Knowledge, according to Plato, is grasping the true being of a thing. As the Sophists have conclusively shown, the true nature of a thing cannot be known through sense‑perception. The true being of a thing is its idea, its eternal, unchangeable, and universal nature and it can be known only by a special method of inquiry.

The method he employs for acquiring the knowledge of true beings is the Dialectical Method of Socrates; but not only that; he also developed the theory of this method. Dialectic is not discussion for the sake of discussion. Its procedure of questions and answers is aimed at examining opinions based upon the apprehension of particulars in sense‑perception in order to discover, by the help of reason, their true nature, the universal idea that is true of all such particulars.

It is a gradual process by the aid of which we pass from the sensible to the ideal. After these universal ideas have been discovered, their subdivisions (species) are ascertained. Thus, by a process of synthesis and analysis we pass upward and downward from idea to idea and view the whole range of ideas.

Theory of Ideas ‑ Ordinarily, it is thought that the idea or concept of a horse is formed by abstracting the common qualities shared by

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Frank Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. ۷۳ -۱.

all particular horses. This idea or concept is regarded as a piece of knowledge existing in the mind of the knower. This is not Plato's view. He holds that this universal idea which is true of all horses is not a piece of knowledge but a piece of reality.

It transcends particular horses and lives in a separate world, the world of ideas. It is

present in its transient, changing appearances in sense-perception only in so far as they participate in it. What is true of the idea of a horse is true of all other ideas.

They all exist in the world of ideas and, by viewing the world of ideas in this way, we apprehend the whole of reality, the whole of rational cosmos. In this rational cosmos, there are ideas of all things (even such things as tables and chairs), qualities, relations, virtues, and values. The highest idea is the Idea of the Good which is identical with the Beautiful and the highest knowledge is to apprehend the Idea of the Good.

Plato illustrates the relation between the rational cosmos, the world of ideas, and the world of sensuous experience by his famous allegory of the cave. Imagine a cave with an opening at one end outside which there is burning a bright fire. At the other end there is a screen and between the fire and the screen there are men facing the screen so chained from childhood that they can make no movement of legs and

necks, but can see only what is in front of them on the screen.

As these men cannot turn their heads round, they will see only the shadows of one another and of the things they carry, which the fire throws on the screen, and will consider them real objects.

But suppose one of them is released and goes out of the cave; first he will be dazzled by the glare of light, but soon his eyes will get adjusted to light and enable him to see, then he will see the shadows of objects on water, then the objects themselves, then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven by night, and last of all he will be able to see the sun by day and will contemplate it as it is.

And when he remembers his condition when he was imprisoned in the cave and the condition of his fellow-prisoners, he will felicitate himself on the change and pity them.(۱)

The cave is the world of sight, the light of fire is the sun, and the man's journey is like

the upward ascent of the soul into the intellectual world, the world of ideas. "The Idea of the Good," like the sun, "appears last of all" and, "when seen, is inferred to be the universal author of all…things beautiful and right, parent of light in the visible world and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellect; and

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.Republic, VII, ۵۱۴…۱۶ -۱

this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life (must have his eyes fixed."(۱

If eternal ideas are the only pure beings and the world of ideas is the only real world, from where has appeared the changing world of sense? To explain this Plato postulates another principle…the principle of Not…Being which means what is other than Being.(۲) Not…Being is the same thing as matter. It is unreal and yet exists as a .formless substratum of the phenomenal world

When this formless Not…Being receives the impression of ideas, the world of sense…perception appears. It has reality only in so far as it has the impress of ideas. In so far as it is material, it is unreal. It is therefore, wrong to call it the real world. It is .merely a world of shadows

Cosmology … In the sphere of cosmology Plato does not find himself on solid ground .and, therefore, claims only probability for his cosmological views

God, the maker of the world, fashioned its body out of the four elements leaving no part of them outside, after the pattern of the world of ideas. In order to make it as perfect as possible, He put intelligence into it and placed in its centre the world…soul, .which had been created earlier to be its ruler and mistress

Thus, the world became a veritable living creature endowed with intelligence and soul. As there could be only one best possible, copy of the original, there

.Ibid., ۵۱۷ -۱
.Sophist, ۲۵۸ -۲

.is only one world and it is in the best of all forms, the spherical form

Then by some mathematical manipulation of the parts of the world, the Creator made the orbits of the seven heavens. He sought to make the world eternal so far as it might be. Now, to bestow eternity, an attribute of the ideal world, in its fullness upon a .creature was impossible. Therefore He created time as the moving image of eternity

He then made the sun to measure the movement of the planets, and thus brought about day and night: Thus was followed by the creation of the heavenly race of the gods (the stars and planets) and the species in air and water and the wild animals on .land

Thus having been done, the Creator Himself, made the divine part of man, reason, mixed it with the four elements, divided the mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star. He then ordered the gods, His children, to do .the rest to complete the universe by interweaving the mortal with the immortal

These children of the Creator, obeying the Father's order, made each separate body by welding the portions of the four elements, temporarily borrowed and to be restored in due course, and fastened the immortal souls to these mortal bodies which .are perpetually in flux

It is remarkable that this mythical account of the creation of the universe, about which Plato himself was uncertain, exerted an extraordinary

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.influence on medieval thought

Psychology ... The soul is immaterial and prior to the body. The body is intended by nature to be its servant and to listen to its commands. Once the soul lived with God in the world of ideas. Owing to its desire for the sensuous world, it was brought down

and encaged in a material body and condemned to pass through a stage of .purification

On release from the body it has to to give an account of itself before the judgment…seat. Those who have been virtuous in this world are sent after death to the Isles of the Blessed, to their respective stars, and the wicked to Tartarus to suffer .punishment

A few great sinners like potentates are, however, kept in Hades as a salutary terror to others.(١) If after undergoing full punishment a soul becomes wiser, it has a better lot; but if it still persists in folly and does not see the truth, it goes down lower and lower transmigrating from the body of one animal to that of another, never passing into human form.(٢) The middling souls may pass from human to animal form and, vice .versa, from animal to human form

As the soul can know pure and eternal ideas and only like can know like, it must also be pure and eternal, at least in part. Its pre…existence in the world of ideas is proved by the fact that it is originally endowed with certain principles and axioms which are not given

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.Phaedo, ١١٣ E; Gorgias, ٥٢٥ -١

.Phaedrus, ٢٤٩ -٢

by sense…experience and therefore can only be explained as recollections from the (previous life of the soul occasioned by sense…experience.(١

The soul is also immortal. Its immortality has to be accepted on these grounds: (١) The soul is simple and indivisible; therefore, it can neither be produced by composition nor destroyed by decomposition.(٢) (٢) The soul is a principle of life; it, therefore, cannot become its contradictory, death.(٣) (٣) Everything is destroyed by its peculiar evil. Ignorance, injustice, and intemperance are the peculiar evils of the soul, but they do (not destroy the vicious soul; the soul is therefore indestructible and immortal.(۴

The soul is self_moving and ever in motion and that which is ever in motion is (۴) immortal.(۵) (۵) The soul is rational and moral. It must have an after_life in which by rewards and punishments the injustices and imperfections of this life may be rectified. (۶) In yearning for the eternal ideas of beauty and truth, the soul is yearning for immortality, since what is passionately desired and cannot be fully achieved in this life must be attainable in the life hereafter.

The soul has three parts: reason, spirit, and appetite. The spirited part sometimes sides with reason and obeys its commands. Spirit includes such impulses as ambition, anger, and righteous indignation, and appetite includes desire for sensuous pleasure, wealth, and all forms of bodily satisfaction. Sometimes appetite gets the better of it and the two conspire and rebel against reason. The harmonious soul is that in which

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۱- Meno, ۸۶; Phaedo, ۷۳.

۲- Phaedo, ۷۸.

۳- Ibid., ۸۰.

۴- Republic, X, ۶۰۹.

۵- Phaedrus, ۲۴۵.

all the three parts work harmoniously, each discharging its own function, the rational part commanding and the spirited and appetitive parts obeying its commands.

Ethics _ The soul is in essence rational and immortal. The world of true beings, the world of ideas, is the source of all its goodness. The body is material and Not_Being and is the ground of all evil. It is only a temporary prison house. Release from the body and contemplation of the beautiful realm of ideas is the ultimate goal of life.

The embodied soul is wise if reason rules all its impulses. It is brave if its spirited part aids and obeys the rational part, temperate, if both spirit and appetite obey the dictates of reason, and just if all the three parts perform their respective functions in unison. The ideal of this life is achieved when a man is wise, brave; temperate, and just. The highest good of life is the harmony of the soul which is attained by the

exercise of all the four virtues, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, under the guidance of reason. The greatest happiness attends the life that achieves the highest .good and contemplates the highest ideas

Aesthetics … All art is functional. Its function is to imitate, but not to imitate the objects of experience, but ideal realities. The artist, therefore, must learn to contemplate the ideal world. Sensible objects only participate in the ideas. They are only shadows of reality. If art…were to imitate these objects; it

p: ۱۹۰

would produce nothing better than the shadows of shadows, and if it created illusions .and distortions it would be thrice removed from reality

All art, intellectual or useful, must be subordinated to the good of the State and the moral life of its citizens. Only these art…forms should be encouraged in every art which express the simplicity of a rightly and nobly…ordered mind. On their simplicity depends their style, harmony, grace, and rhythm, which qualities elevate the soul and instil true .and noble ideas into it

Our artists should be only those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful. In poetry only hymns to the gods and praise of famous men .should be permitted. Excessive devotion to art is not desirable. It creates effeminacy

Exhibition of vice, intemperance, meanness, and indecency and all that is base and impure should be banished from the State. Sorrowful tunes and tales create weakness in the soul and the comic art turns men into buffoons. Some painting .creates illusions and some sculptura and architecture exhibit false proportion

The former creates falsehood and the latter disorder in the soul. All art which shows these tendencies should be banned. To effect this all art…productions should be .brought under strict censorship

Theory of Education … The Platonic theory of education aims at making the individuals belonging…to…the two higher…classes truly cultured and well equipped for discharging

their respective functions, in the State by drawing out what is already dimly known to them because of

p: ١٩١

.their having lived before birth in the real world, the world of ideas

It envisages a careful selection of the most promising children and their training under a rigorous discipline backed by careful censorship in (١) music, covering everything within the province of the Muses including poetry and literature, and (٢) gymnastics, meaning physical culture. The teaching of music forbids stories without moral significance in Homer and Hesiod, because they depict gods as doing evil deeds, and anything that does not inculcate sobriety, temperance, control over laughter, willingness to die for the State, and the belief that slavery is worse than .death

Drama should depict only faultless characters of high birth, and any play in which an actor is made to take the part of a villain, a criminal, a woman, or a slave should not be permitted. That music which is expressive of courage and harmony is to be encouraged, and the songs which express sorrow or induce relaxation are to be prohibited. Up to a certain age the young should get no chance of seeing what is bad, .ugly, or terrifying

The study of music and gymnastics is to be followed by that of mathematics and dialectics right up to the age of thirty–five. Then come fifteen years of practical experience in subordinate offices leading at the age of fifty to the pure study of philo–sophy. When this study is completed, only then is a person accomplished enough to hold the highest office of the State and become

p: ١٩٢

.a philosopher–king

Theory of the State – According to Plato, there are five types of political organisations: aristocracy, the rule of the best; timocracy, in which the rulers are motivated by

honour; oligarchy, in which the rulers seek wealth; democracy, the rule of the .masses; and tyranny, the rule of one man advancing solely his own selfish interests

In the Republic Plato gives an outline of what he regards as the Ideal State. It is a form of intellectual aristocracy. The State is the individual writ large. On the analogy of the tripartite division of the soul, society is stratified into three classes, the rulers, the auxiliary, and the artisans, each class having its own specific virtue: the rulers wisdom, .the auxiliary valour, and the artisans self…restraint and willing obedience

To keep people contented in their respective classes the State would have to propagate "a royal lie" that God has created human beings of three kinds: the best are made of gold, the second best made of silver, and the common herd of brass or iron, the first fit to be administrators, the second warriors, and the rest manual workers … a .myth which would become a common belief in about two generations

The function of the rulers is to mould the State in the likeness of the State "of which the pattern is laid up in heaven," in the realm of ideas, of the auxiliaries to help the rulers by military service and protect the State in times of war or

revolt, and of the artisans to carry on trade, manual labour, and craftsmanship. Since it is only the philosopher who has knowledge of reality, he alone deserves to be a king. He should be persuaded to accept the office, though he would be generally unwilling .to do so

As selfishness is the root of all social evil, the guardians, i. e., the rulers and warriors, are to live a common life with a common mess as one family without any private property, wives, or children. Men between ۲۵ and ۵۵ and women between ۲۰ and ۴۰ (i. e., when they are in the prime of life) are to be brought together on ceremonial occasions specially arranged for intercourse, in numbers suitable for the required .population

The pairing on these occasions is to be determined apparently by lots, but actually by

.secret manipulation in such a way that the braver get the fairer

As in a society of communism of property, wives, and children, no child would know his parents and no parents their children, all those belonging to an older generation would be called fathers and mothers by the younger generation and all those belonging to a younger generation would be addressed as sons and daughters by those of the older generation. Those children who were begotten at the time when their fathers and mothers came together will be called by one another brothers and .sisters

The children born will be brought up by nurses in quarters specially provided for

p: ۱۹۴

them. They should get only the necessities of life, and be so brought up as to be able to bear the roughness and hardships of life. The State on the whole should not be allowed to become too rich or too poor, for both riches and poverty lead to social evils. .Nor is the State to be allowed to be too large or too small

Its size "shall not be larger or smaller than is consistent with its unity" which indeed is its greatest good. Women are to take equal part in education and State services as .administrators or warriors

This is an outline of Plato's Ideal State. But he himself acknowledges that it is not fully realizable. Therefore in a later work, the Laws, he modifies it in several important ways and gives a more practicable plan of what he regards as the second best State. .In this State he places freedom and friendship side by side with reason

All citizens should be free and given a share in government. Of course, slaves who should be only foreigners are not counted among the citizens. The administration he now recommends is a mixture of aristocracy and democracy. Women are now included in the community meals of the guardians. Marriage is also permitted and .family life and private property restored

Aristotle .۵

Aristotle (۳۸۴...۳۲۲ B.C.) was born at Stagira in Macedon, where his father who belonged to a family of physicians was employed as Court physician to the King. At the age of seventeen he

became Plato's pupil at the Academy at Athens which he left twenty years later at Plato's death. In ۳۳۴ B.C. King Philip of Macedon engaged him as his son Alexander's .teacher and he worked in that capacity for seven years

Thereafter he came back to Athens and opened a new educational institution at the Lyceum. Because of Aristotle's habit of walking while teaching, this institution came to be known as the Peripatetic school. Aristotle remained the head of this school for twelve years during which he wrote most of his works. At the close of this period he was indicted for impiety and compelled to flee to Chalcis in the Greek island Euboea .where he died a year later

Aristotle wrote on every subject then known in the world and most of his writings have come down to us. The collection of his logical works is entitled the Organon. His writings on what he called First Principles were collected by a compiler and named .Metaphysica, for they were placed after the writings on physics

He wrote several works on physics, including the one called Auscultationes Physicae, and several on the natural history of animals. On psychology he wrote many treatises, including three on the soul. His chief ethical writing is the Nicomehean Ethics, and his .works on literary arts are named the Rhetoric and the Poetics

According to Aristotle, there are three divisions of philosophy: (۱) theoretical studies in which the attempt is made to know the existent, (۲) practical, which relate

to conduct and the rules of conduct, and (۳) poetic, relating to the creative works of art. The first is again divided into mathematics, physics, and the “first philosophy.” There is, however, a study which precedes all these as a precondition. That is the

.study of logic

Logic … Aristotle has been justly said to be the founder of logic. The principles of correct reasoning were employed in practice by his predecessors in their search for knowledge, but it was he alone who made their theoretical study, clarified them, and organized them into a well…rounded system which had an amazing influence on subsequent thought both in the East and the West. But for a few spasmodic revolts, .the Organon ruled supreme for over two thousand years

In the Organon, Aristotle shows that a simple or compound word expresses a meaning or a mental representation of a thing. This meaning or mental re… presentation is called a term. A proposition consists of a subject word expressing the mental representation of an existent, a predicate word expressing the mental representation of something that is asserted (or denied) of that existent, and the .(mark of assertion, is (or of denial, is not

A true proposition is the verbal expression of a true judgment which is a combination or separation of two terms (expressed by the subject and the predicate) which corresponds with the combination or separation of two real things. A false proposition is the expression of a false judgment which is a combination or separation

p: ١٩٧

.of two terms which have no such correspondence

The mental representations of subjects are combined in several ways. These ways are determined by the categories, the ten ultimate modes of being. These categories arc substance, quality, quantity, relation, where, when, position possession, action, and passion. Nothing can be predicated of any existent which does not fall in one of these categories. Sonic substances, e. g., first essences and individuals. can be .expressed only as subjects of propositions, never as predicate

Two propositions in one of which a predicate is affirmed of a subject (A is B) and the other in which it is denied (A is not B) are called contradictories. Of such propositions

one must be false and the other must be true. This law is called by Aristotle the Law of ".Contradiction. Again, "one can either deny or affirm every predicate of every subject

Between its denial and affirmation there is no middle course. This principle is called by him the Law of Excluded Middle. Both of these laws are based on the metaphysical principle that "the same thing cannot at the same time and in the same respect belong and not belong to the same thing." This principle is known to us immediately and intuitively and, therefore, requires no demonstration. All demonstration and all certain .knowledge depend on this principle

The mental representations of the essential attributes common to all the individuals in a class constitute a class…concept. The contents of this concept form the definition of the class. The

essential attributes of man, rationality and animality; form the concept and constitute .the definition of man

Logic for Aristotle is a necessary process. It is a process of reasoning which consists in proving a proposition by showing that it is such and such and it cannot be otherwise. .This, proof is provided in the following two ways

The first way in which a proposition is proved or demonstrated is that of deduction the unit of which is a syllogism, a name given by Aristotle himself to a process by which the truth of a proposition is established by showing that it necessarily follows from its presuppositions called the major and the minor premises, by virtue of their .possessing a common term

John's mortality is established by showing that John is a man (minor premise) and man is mortal (major premise), man being a common or middle term by the help of .which a connection is established between John and mortality

Thus, by syllogism it is shown that what is true of a whole class (i. e., the universal truth expressed by "all") is true of each individual or a smaller group, on the ground

that the individual or the small group belongs to that class. So the fundamental principle of syllogism is "whatever is affirmed (or denied) of an entire class or kind may be affirmed (or denied) of any part" thereof…the principle called the Dictum de omni et nullo.

This principle, like the basic principles of all sciences, is known intuitively. Its

application enables us to derive the particular from the universal. How the conclusions of syllogisms are affected by the differences in quality (affirmation or negation) or quantity (extension to all, some, or only one) of the premises, is worked out with remarkable precision.

All scientific conclusions are ultimately drawn by syllogistic reasoning from premises which are themselves known immediately and intuitively to be absolutely certain, requiring no proof.

The second way of proving a proposition is that of induction, a process by which universal principles are derived from particular experiences by their complete enumeration. In experience, sensuous particulars are prior and more knowable to us, but absolutely prior and more knowable are the concepts which are the most general and the more remote from sensations.

Therefore, deduction which takes us from the universal to the particular is more scientific, prior in nature, and more rigorously demonstrative. Those who cannot follow… the deductive way may, however, employ induction. Thus, syllogistic deduction was over…emphasized by Aristotle and induction was given only a secondary place and its details were not worked out by him.

Metaphysics … Every object of experience consists of two factors, a substratum (matter) and a universal element common to all objects of the same type (its form or essence), the mental representation of which is its concept. Plato does not deny the existence of this form or essence in individual objects, but there it is only as a copy of

.the form or essence existing in the world of ideas

Aristotle argues

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that if, to explain the form of man, it is necessary to postulate the ideal form in the world of ideas, it would be necessary also to postulate a third form of which both of .these forms are copies

Besides, these independent essences are not of any help to things in their existence, motion, or change. Again, if the ideas are the essences of things, how can essences exist apart from the things of which they are the essences? He concludes that Plato's world of ideas is an unnecessary duplication of the world of sensible things. It is a mere poetic fiction. The essences or forms of things exist only in those things: they .are immanent in them. The world of sensible things is, therefore, the only real world

There are four fundamental principles which run through all spheres of the real world. These are (۱) Matter or Substratum, (۲) Form or Essence, (۳) Efficient cause, and (۴) the End or the Final cause. These principles are according to Aristotle, the causes of .everything that exists in the world

Matter is the principle of imperfection and individuation of things. It is not non…existent as Plato had thought, but exists as a potentiality. Form consists of essential elements common to all individual objects of the same type and is the actualization of material potentiality. As forms are eternal and unchanging, they are .the most knowable and the most worthy subjects of knowledge

All movement is change from potentiality to actuality, and for everything

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in existence there is a moving or efficient cause. In organic things, the essence, the efficient cause, and the end are one. The essence is shape; it shapes, and its own completion is its end. The soul is the form of the body and is also its moving and final

.cause

There are things in existence that both move and are unmoved. There are things also which are only moved. Therefore, there is a third something (tertium quid) which moves, but is not itself moved. This something, this unmoved mover is God Himself. He is the Pure Eternal Form without any alloy of matter, the absolutely perfect .actuality

He is the Absolute Spirit identical with Reason, loved by everything, and sought as the perfect ideal by everything. He produces all motion by being loved, and so is the final cause of all activity. In Him the distinction of the individual and the universal .completely disappears

God is the unmoved mover, but Aristotle is not certain that there is only one unmoved mover. At another place astronomical considerations lead him to conclude that every sphere has an unmoved moving spirit and there are forty…seven or fifty…two such .spirits in all

Physics … The earth is the centre of the universe. Around this centre are the concentric layers of water, air, fire, and ether. In the ethereal layer are the celestial spheres, carrying planets, the sun, and the moon. Some of the spheres are backward…moving. The outermost sphere is that of the fixed stars which

God touches without being touched, and to which He gives the best of motions, the uniform circular rotation, and that with a purpose, for the motion is not mechanical .but teleological

The motion of the outermost sphere determines the motion of all other spheres, which is imperfect in a descending scale. Rather inconsistently Aristotle also assigns a .spirit…an unmoved mover…to every sphere

Motion exists in three categories, quantity (increase or decrease), quality (transformation), and space (change of place). The motion of the universe is not linear

but circular. There are two conditions of motion…space and time. Space is the limit by .which a body is bound, the boundary by which it is enclosed

From this definition it follows that there is no Void and that space is not unlimited but limited. Beyond the sphere of the stars there is no space. Time is the number and measure of motion according to before and after. It is infinite. The universe which .moves in time is also eternal. It has always been and shall always be

Biology and Psychology … The soul is the form of the living body as well as the principle of its motion and its end. It determines the structure and movements of its specific body and uses it as an instrument for itself. As each soul develops its own specific .body, there is no transmigration of a soul from one body to another

There are different grades of souls as there are different grades of life. The souls of

p: ۲۰۳

plants determine their functions, of lower animals theirs, and of men theirs. The functions of plants are assimilation, growth, and reproduction, those of lower animals are, in addition to these, sensitivity, appetite, and locomotion, while those of men are .all these together with their specific function, reason

As the human soul combines within itself the function of all animate existence, it is a veritable microcosm. There is development within each species, but there is no evolution from species to species. Each organ has its own end and this end is its specific activity. The heart is the seat of sensations; from sensations arise memory, .imagination, and pleasure and pain, and from pleasure and pain, desire

Reason is either passive or active. In passive reason concepts are potentially present; in active reason they are actualized. All lower functions and whatever arises in consequence, being connected with the body, cease with the death of the body. Even passive reason which deals with images that create potentiality for the arousal of concepts perishes with the body. Only active reason, for it is universal, not individual and personal, remains untouched by death. It alone is imperishable and immortal.

.How it is related to the individual and to God, is not made quite clear

Ethics … In the theory of morality Aristotle raises the question of the good for man(۱) … the good which is the end of all human ends. His reply is as follows: As in all living beings, the essence, the principle

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.Nicomachean Ethics, ۱, ۲ -۱

of activity, and end are identical, the ultimate end or the good of an organism must .consist in its essence, in its highest actualization

The highest realization of the essence of man consists in active exercise of the faculty distinctive of him, the faculty of reason. The supreme excellence of man or the good for him, therefore, consists in the proper performance of his functions as a rational .being throughout the whole of his life

The ultimate end of man so defined is called by Aristotle happiness. From this definition of happiness it follows that it is not the same thing as pleasure. Pleasure is only an accompaniment of happiness, as beauty is the accompaniment of the perfect physical development of youth.(۱) The highest pleasure attends the highest .happiness

While happiness in all its degrees is good, pleasure may be good or bad according as it accompanies good or bad activities. While there is nothing more valuable than happiness, there are things which are more valuable than pleasure. Virtue, for .example, is one, truth another

The ethical goal of happiness cannot be attained without some non…ethical prerequisites, such as the proper discharge of mental and bodily functions and the satisfaction of economic needs. No child or slave or poverty…stricken person can .achieve this goal

Human excellence expresses itself in virtue. By virtue is meant the habitual direction

of the will to the guarding of the golden mean, the balance between excess and defect. For example, the virtue of courage is a mean between

p: ۲۰۵

.Ibid., X, ۴ -۱

.foolhardiness and cowardice and that of liberality between prodigality and meanness

Human happiness or excellence manifests itself in two ways: first, in the habitual subordination of the animal side of man's nature, his appetites, desires, and passions, to rational rule; secondly, in the exercise of reason in the search for knowledge and contemplation of truth. In the former case, happiness expresses itself in moral virtues (courage, temperance, liberality, magnanimity, love of honour, mildness, truthfulness, .(friendship, and, the highest of them all, justice

In the latter case, it manifests itself in intellectual virtues which are of two types: (۱) those of theoretical reason which we use in our inquiry in the nature of what is necessary and in the intuitive apprehension of truth (science and reason), and (۲) those of practical reason by which we exercise deliberation in such matters as are possible for us to change (art and practical wisdom). Science is used in demonstration, and reason in the immediate apprehension of principles. The highest virtue consists in .the exercise of theoretical reason

For virtuous life some non_ethical goods are also needed. Art is productive of something beyond itself and its value lies in the product. Practical wisdom relates to conduct which is an end in itself and the worth of which lies in intention; it finds the right means for the end in view and is deliberative, critical, imperative, and formative .of judgment by the use of intelligence

Aristotle's attitude towards some human relations is rather odd. He regards the son

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as the property of his father and the slave the property of his master.(۱) The father

may repudiate his son, but the son cannot repudiate his father.(۲) The master cannot be a friend to his slave in so far as he is a slave, but he can be so in so far as he is a man.(۳) Sympathy for the suffering of mankind, except when it is the suffering of a friend, leaves Aristotle emotionally unmoved.(۴)

Politics … The first natural community for him is the family, which, when complete, consists of father, wife, children, and slaves. The family is based on two relations, the relation between man and woman and that between master and slave, both of which are considered to be natural.

To all members of the family the father is an absolute ruler, but he should rule the slaves with mildness, the wife as a free member of the community, and children by right of affection and seniority.(۵) The most comprehensive human society is the State.

The aim of the State is to produce good citizens, individuals living a virtuous and happy life. As the highest virtues are intellectual, it is the duty of the State not to create warriors, but men capable of making the right use of peace which is conducive to intellectual activity. Yet the State should be strong enough to protect itself.

Its size should neither be too large nor too small for its existence as an articulate whole. Its whole territory should

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۱- Ibid., ۱۱۳۴b.

۲- Ibid., ۱۱۶۳b.

۳- Ibid., ۱۱۶۱ b.

۴- Bertrand Russell, op. cit., p. ۲۰۶.

۵- Politics, I, ۵.

be survey able from a hill…top (which is, of course, possible only in a City…State). The State should wage no wars except in self…defence or to subjugate "natural slaves," i.e., inferior people.

The Greeks combine courage with culture and are, therefore, superior people; and the superior people are alone justified in extending their rule over those who are inferior.(1) The State should be self-sufficient and yet have import and export .trade…an apparent inconsistency

The aim of education is virtue, not utility. It should be provided for free children, but not in any skill that might enable them to earn money or give them professional efficiency or deform their bodies, for citizens should neither lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen, which is ignoble and inimical to virtue, nor the life of professional athletes, which is detrimental to health. The slaves may, however, be trained in useful .arts such as cooking and farming

The citizens should own land, but the tilling of it should be left to the slaves for it leaves no leisure and the citizens need leisure for their development. They should be made to learn drawing so as to be able to appreciate the beauty of form and of painting and sculpture expressive of moral truth; and to learn music no more than just .enough for critical enjoyment

The treatment given to citizens should be determined by the differences of capability, property, birth, and freedom. Equals should be treated as equals and unequals as un… equals. Although the individual citizen

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.Ibid., VII, ۷ -۱

is prior to the State in point of time, the State is prior to the individual in significance, .for the whole is prior to its parts

As man is a social animal, the natural aim of the individual is to live in society. The rational aim of society is the happiness of man. So in a rational society the interests of .the individual and the State are harmonized

The worth of the individual citizens depends on the kind of government under which

they are brought up. Governments are good or bad according as they seek the .interest of all or only their own interest

Judged by this criterion, there are three forms of good government (monarchy, aristocracy, and polity), and three forms of bad government (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy), according as the rule is of one man, of a few, or of many. The best form of government is a monarchy in which the ruler is a man of intellectual eminence and .moral worth

Next best is aristocracy in which there are a few persons possessed of such qualities. Aristocracy is better than polity in which the citizens are politically, intellectually, and morally nearly equal. The worst form of government is tyranny, for the corruption of the best is worst; next is oligarchy which is the rule of the rich few. Democracy is the .least bad of all bad governments

Art … Goodness and beauty are different, for the former is found only in conduct and the latter also in things that

p: ۲۰۹

are not moved.(۱) Beauty is created by art. Art is the imparting of formal elements to a material. The formal elements so imparted correspond to two primary impulses of .man: (۱) imitation, and (۲) harmony, rhythm, and melody

Imitation is pleasing to us even when it mirrors the most horrid of objects, for it involves learning and knowing by recognition, and knowing is always pleasant. By harmony, rhythm, and melodies even new…born babies are attracted, because these are natural movements, and natural movements like those of actions are always .pleasing. Nature has made man capable of all varieties of artistic skill

The object of art is imitation, but not merely so. It is the imitation of the universal aspects of things, and an imitation in which the artist can go even as far as to make the copy of the handsome "handsomer" by combining scattered elements and, thus, (partly imitating and partly completing what is left by nature incomplete.(۲

The pleasure of art. is due to relief by catharsis or release of pent…up emotions. For example, tragedy, which is the imitation of serious action, morally significant and of some magnitude, affords such relief by the catharsis of pity and fear. Comedy which is the imitation of people inferior in some fault or deformity, which is not painful or a cause of pain to others, liberates laughter. The purgation of emotions in both tragedy .and comedy leaves the spectators minds calm and serene

Poetry is more important and of greater philosophical significance than

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.Metaphysica, XII, ۳ -۱

.Physics, ۱۱۹a, ۱۵ -۲

history, for it tells us something about the universals, while history speaks of the particulars. The universal with which poetry deals is that which a person would necessarily or probably do or say, and the particular is that which a person actually does or says. The poet is either a man of sensibility or of inspiration. In the first case .he has ready sympathies, in the second he is possessed

The Decline .۶

The most glorious period of Athenian cultural and political ascendancy was the age of Pericles. In ۴۳۰ B.C. Athens was ravaged by plague. In the same year began the Peloponnesian war between Sparta and Athens which after twenty…seven years struggle ended in the complete overthrow of Athens. This was followed by the defeat of the Athenians and their allies, the Thebans, by Philip of Macedon in ۳۲۷ B.C. and the annexation of Greece to the Roman Empire in ۱۴۶ B.C.In the wake of this political .decline came the general demoralization of private and public life

Intellectual activity, however, did not cease with social and political decline. Thinkers of different mental make…up reacted differently to this fall. Some of them reacted positively and sought remedy for all social evils in social change, practice of virtue, .and pursuit of truth, and built great philosophical systems

To this group belonged the great Trio, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, in whom Greek philosophy reached its highest point. Some, like Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope, became cynical about the world as a whole; some others, Pyrrho and Timon,

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became sceptical about the very possibility of knowledge. Zeno and his followers found tranquillity in the life dedicated to virtue, while Epicurus and his followers turned their eyes from the prevailing evils and sought relief in the pursuit of pleasure.

Thus, during the period of political decline and social and moral disintegration, besides the great systems of Plato and Aristotle and their trails, there arose four other modes of thought, Cynicism, Scepticism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Despite some critical revisions and re…examination, three of them at least were the philosophies of retreat, and all four of them taken together were symptoms of Greek intellectual decline.

The Cynics … The founder of the Cynical school at Athens was Antisthenes, about twenty years Plato's senior. He despised the pleasures of the senses, dressed like a labourer, and moved amongst the working classes. His motto was "back to nature," by which he meant return to a state of life in which there was no government, no marriage, no private property, no luxury, no established religion. His disciple, Diogenes of Sinope, surpassed him in fame.

Diogenes was about twenty…seven years older than Aristotle and died a year after him. While still very young, he went to Antisthenes in search of wisdom and followed him like a dog. The old cynic did not like him and even beat him with a stick to drive him away, but the lad would not move.

His father was a money…changer who had been sent to prison for defacing coins. Diogenes' aim

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was "to deface all the coinage current in the world. Every conventional stamp was false. The men stamped as generals and kings, the things stamped as honour and

(wisdom and happiness and riches: all were base metals with lying superscriptions."(۱)

He discarded all conventions regarding dress and behaviour, procured food by begging, and lived in a tub. He declared brotherhood not only with all human beings but also with animals. It is said that "he once went through the streets holding up a lantern looking for an honest man"; and when Alexander the Great visited him at Corinth and asked him if he could do anything for him he replied, "Yes, stand from between me and the sun."

The Sceptics ـThe sceptics were under the influence of the preـSocratic philosophers of nature. The founder of the school, Pyrrho, was about twenty three years younger than Aristotle. All our knowledge of him comes from his pupil, Timon, for he himself never wrote any book. He maintained that from the senses we know only what a thing appears and not what it actually is.

Nor can we know anything through philosophy, for no two schools agree on any major problem and in every ease an affirmation and its denial can be proved with equal force. Philosophy is fruitless because it can create no certainty, and impossible because it leads to endless contradictions. It is equally impossible to know any ethical truth and, therefore, there is no rational ground for the preference of one

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۱- A. W. Benn, Philosophy of Greece, Vol. ۱۱, p. ۱۱۷; Bertrand Russell, op. cit p. ۲۵۴

action to another. Hence in all matters, moral or metaphysical, we should have an attitude of complete indifference.

Timon denied even the possibility of logical reasoning. In order to avoid an endless chain of proـsyllogism to establish a conclusion, we must start from selfـevident principles, but there are no selfـevident principles and all starting points of reasoning are merely hypothetical. All speculation should, therefore, be suspended.

The school of Pyrrho ended with Timon, but strangely enough his doctrines found

their way to the very heart of Plato's institution, the Academy, for they deeply influenced its head, Arcesilaus (۳۱۶_۲۴۱ B.C.) and his successor, Carneades (۲۱۴_۱۲۹ B.C.). The Academy under the former came to be known as the Middle Academy and .under the latter the New Academy

According to Arcesilaus, nothing should be assumed unconditionally. Socrates had said before him that one thing alone he knew, and that was that he knew nothing. Arcesilaus went further and declared that he did not even know that with certainty His successor, Carneades, admitted that although there is no certainty in knowledge, .some judgments have a degree of probability and can be made to guide practice

According to him, the idea of God is full of contradictions and the argument that God exists because the world is rational, beautiful, and good is fallacious. He fully mirrored the moral decadence of Attica in maintaining that unjust aggression against a weak neighbour was the right course of action and that it would be foolish if in a dangerous situation

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.the stronger did not save themselves by sacrificing the weak

The Stoics _ The Stoic school was founded at Athens nineteen years after the death of Aristotle by Zeno of Citium (in Cyprus) who at the time was twenty_eight years of age. His followers were Cleanthes (third century B.C.), Chrysippus (e. ۲۸۲_۲۰۹ B.C.), and Diogenes of Babylonia (second century B.C.). It was Chrysippus who perfected the Stoic system on all sides. After Diogenes the Stoic doctrines moved from Athens to Rome. The school acquired its name from Stoa Poikile (the Painted Porch) where it .used to assemble. Zeno, like Heraclitus, was a pantheist

He maintained that the universe is a perfect sphere floating in empty space and is animated by its own soul, the Logos or Cosmic Reason. Form or the force that moves and matter that is moved are both corporeal; only the former has finer corporeality .than the latter. Both are combined in the individual

The soul is material…a spark of divine fire. It is a tabula rasa, a blank tablet, which receives impressions from things. It retains these impressions as memory…images, and from these memory images forms ideas by abstraction. Thus, while things are objective, concepts are subjective. All our knowledge of objects depends upon percepts and the concepts derived from these percepts. Its criterion is the compelling .force of impressions

The range of Stoic interest was rather narrow. It lay chiefly in ethics. Other studies were taken only as ancillary. According to Stoicism, man's highest duty is to

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regulate life in accordance with the laws of nature, which manifest the rational .purpose of the universe, and thereby reach the highest measure of perfection

Neither pleasure nor self…interest should determine any of his personal or social actions. Reason should rule him and everything in him as the Logos rules the world and all its laws. The laws of his life are virtues. He should master all his passions and emotions and lead the life of perfect virtue. Virtue is the only good and vice the only .evil, and the life of virtue alone is the life of happiness

The Epicureans … The term “epicureans” is nowadays used to mean those who are seekers of sensuous pleasures. There is no such implication when it is used in connection with the school opened by Epicurus at Athens seventeen years after the death of Aristotle. There is no doubt that Epicurus identified happiness with pleasure and regarded it as the natural and rational goal of life, but he maintained that it consists in the pleasures of the mind, the pleasures of rational living or the pleasures .which only men of culture can enjoy

These comprise virtuous conduct, aesthetic appreciation, and friendship of the gifted and the noble. The pleasures consistent with reason bear the marks of moderation, calm, and repose. An intelligent and prudent man can easily see that pleasures of a life…time are preferable to pleasures of the moment and pleasures of the mind, which include, beside the present ones, these of

the past as recollections and those of the future as anticipations are better than those .of the body

Momentary pleasures have to be sacrificed for the abiding ones. The function of society is to secure the self_interest or personal happiness of individuals. The value of .all laws and all institutions is to be judged by this criterion

Epicurus, like the Stoics, subordinated philosophy to ethics. The aim of philosophy, according to him, is to enable men to lead a happy life. To lead a happy life, free from all fear and worry, people must know the criterion of truth (sense_perception) given .by philosophy, and the causes of things discovered by physics

In metaphysics the Epicureans followed Democritus in every respect except that they gave the atoms the power to deviate from their determined path, and so introduced .an element of contingency in an otherwise mechanically_determined world

They shattered many of the religious beliefs prevalent in their times. According to them, the gods did not create the world, for, being supremely happy, they were not in need of it. Nor is there any reason to believe that they trouble themselves about the .affairs of men. The soul is not immortal; it perishes with the body

To the Epicurean school belonged Metrodorus of Lampsacus (d. before Epicurus), Hermarchus (fl. ۲۷۰ B.C.), Apollodorus (۲nd century BC), and Zeno of Sidon (about ۱۵۰_۷۸ B.C.). None of them added anything to the teachings of the master. In the first century ,B.C., Epicureanism, like other philosophical systems

passed down to Alexandria and Rome, Athens lost its position as the intellectual .centre of the world, and Greek philosophy in Greece virtually came to an end

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Chapter ۵: Alexandrio Syriac Thought

point

The Neo _Pythagoreans

The great conquering sweep of Alexander the Great eastwards not only destroyed the old, intense and narrow life of the self…contained Greek City States but also .marked a decisive change in the intellectual and spiritual life of Greece

With the spread of Greek civilisation over the Near East, the horizons of the individual Greeks were greatly enlarged; but the break…up of the old City…States engendered a sense of isolation and rootlessness which made people look inward for stability and .security, rather than outward as hitherto done

Another and a more potent reason for this shift

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in Greek thinking can be discovered in widespread scepticism after the death of Aristotle. True, scepticism also prevailed when Socrates was born, but the metaphysical speculations of pre…Socratic thinkers led them into the inextricable .confusion of doubt

Socrates asked people to look at man instead of nature, for in the domain of human problems the competence of reason could be demonstrated more easily than in that of the physical or the metaphysical. But the protest which scepticism made after Aristotle was more devastating. It was declared by the sceptics that the entire philosophical venture of their predecessors was hopelessly wrong and also that their .error was without a remedy

This was indeed very saddening. It amounted to the confession that not only were the solutions of the so…called perennial problems of philosophy nonsensical but also that no satisfactory solution was possible, at least with the techniques and methods .hitherto pursued

Reason thus assailed could find refuge only in faith. In the period that follows we find

philosophy renouncing its independence and becoming merely an instrument of .theology

Ritter says, “The feeling of alienation and the yearning after a higher revelation are characteristics of the last centuries of the ancient world; this yearning was, in the first place, but an expression of consciousness of the decline of the classical nations and their cultures, the presentiment of the approach of a new era, and it called into life not only Christianity but also before it pagan and Jewish Alexandrianism and

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(other related developments.”(۱

No longer finding Greece a cordial home for philosophy, the philosophers went over to Egypt and Rome, carrying their doctrines with them. They delivered courses of lectures which were attended with great zeal and enthusiasm by the populace. But the venture did not succeed so well in Rome as it did in Alexandria. In Rome philosophy could lend its weight to poetry, oratory, jurisprudence, and some topics of conversation, but it was in Alexandria that it produced men who gave it originality, .vigour, and drive

Alexandria was not simply a centre of Greek culture and scholarship, but also and more significantly a meeting…place for Greek and Eastern thought. It took a cosmopolitan character and showed a marked leaning towards Oriental thought. The result of this interpretation of Greek and Semitic cultures was the synthetic civilization known as Hellenism in contradistinction to the Hellenic or purely Greek civilization. Hellenism rose to supremacy not only in Alexandria and Syria but throughout Western .Asia

It would be incorrect to identify the present geographical boundaries of Syria with its old ones. In Roman days, at the beginning of the Christian era Syria denoted the country west of the Euphrates and north of the Arabian Desert, including Palestine and Palmyra and extending north to the Taurus. The usual language of Syria was .Aramaic, a language akin to Hebrew

The Hebrew word "Aram" is rendered as "Syria" and originally the words Aramaean and Syrian were synonymous. After the Hellenization of the country, the Greek

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.C. Ritter, History of Philosophy, p. ۳۳۰ -۱

language was used by the ruling class and the officials with very little influence on the masses who continued using their dialect. This state of affairs continued till the first/seventh century when after the Muslim conquest Syriac gradually gave way vernacularly and to some extent liturgically to Arabic, though it had great influence on the vocabulary, pronunciation, and even the grammatical forms of Arabic which .supplanted it

For purposes of studying Alexandrian and Syriac philosophy, for the two run together :and interpenetrate, we can divide our subject into

,Neo…Pythagoreanism (۱)

,The Jewish…Alexandrian Philosophy (۲)

Neo…Platonism, and (۳)

.Early Christianity (۴)

To all these speculations what is common is the dualistic opposition of the divine and the earthly; an abstract conception of God excluding all knowledge of the divine nature; contempt for the world of sense, on the ground of the Platonic doctrines of matter and the descent of the soul of man from a superior world into the body; the theory of intermediate potencies or beings through whom God acts upon the world of phenomena; the requirements of an ascetic self…emancipation from the bondage of (sense; and faith in a higher revelation to man when in a state called Enthusiasm."(۱

Both Neo…Pythagoreanism and the Judaic…Alexandrian philosophy are found together in the beginning of the Christian era. The Neo…Pythagoreans who were fundamentally

religious in their outlook and practices were represented by P. Nigidus Figulus, Sotion, and particularly Apollonius of Tyana, Moderatus of Gades, and, in later times, .Nicomachus of Gerasa and Numenius of Apamea

The Neo…Pythagoreans were highly

.Zeller, Phil. der Grichen Istesitum, Vol. III. p. ۵۶۶ -۱

eclectic in character. They were greatly influenced by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, .not to speak of ancient Pythagoreans whose doctrines they attempted to revive

Neo…Pythagorean doctrines could not flourish in Rome, where, Seneca says they could not find a professor to teach them, but gained a stronghold in Alexandria. The Neo…Pythagoreans combined monotheism with the fatalistic cult of gods and demons but transformed it at the same time with the help of Platonic…Aristotelian teachings into a reverence for God as a pure spirit who is to be served not by outward sacrifices .but by silent prayers and with wisdom and virtue

Like Plato and Aristotle, the Neo…Pythagoreans distinguished between unity and plurality and also between the divine and the earthly. Several attempts were made to get rid of this dualism. There arose consequently a great diversity of opinion with regard to the nature of God and the relation He bears to the world. Some identified .God with the world…soul of Plato

Others thought of Him as an ineffable “Monad” from which flowed both unity and plurality. Still others considered Him immanent but free from all contacts with matter which might pollute Him. It was, therefore, imperative for the Neo…Pythagoreans, especially the last ones, to introduce a Demiurge as a mediator between God and .matter

The metaphysics of the Neo…Pythagorean school required four principles. viz., God, the world…reason, the world…soul, and matter, out of which the first three helped in

formulating the Christian conception of triune God, while the fourth one paved

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.the way for the doctrine of emanation

The Neo…Pythagoreans gave a deeper metaphysical meaning to Number. The ultimate ground of all good as well as the order of the universe was provided by the Monad while the Dyad was held responsible for all disorder and imperfection. The Monad became the symbol for Godhead and the Dyad for matter. The gulf between the two, viz., the Monad and the Dyad, was bridged by the introduction of the idea of a .world…soul which was built upon the Stoic, Aristotelean, and Platonic conceptions

Certain numerological conceptions of the Neo…Pythagoreans appear grotesque to the modern mind It was held by them that the movements of the heavenly bodies were harmoniously adjusted by number…an idea of Egyptian origin…and so certain numbers were regarded as having a sacred character, particularly number ۱۰ which represents .the sum of a pyramid of four stages, ۴…۳…۲…۱=۱۰

In such conceptions, their imagination ran riot to such an extent that one can gain the impression that Neo…Pythagoreanism is nothing more than astrology, occultism, and .twaddle about the mysterious properties of numbers

In epistemology they closely followed Plato, classifying knowledge into spiritual perception, discursive reason, opinion, and sensuous perception. Science, we owe to .discursive reason; inference, to opinion; and beatific vision, to spiritual perception

Nicomachus of Gerasa who lived about ۱۴۰ A.D. was one with Plato in holding that ideas were temporally prior to the formation of the world and also in holding that ideas were numbers. But, whereas Plato had accorded an independent existence to ,ideas

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Nicomachus was content with giving them dependent role. He conceived of ideas as

existing in the divine mind and so acting as patterns according to which the things of .this world are fashioned

Another thinker who attempted a synthesis of Plato and Pythagoras was Maximus of Tyre who taught in the first half of the second century. He was a Sophist and a rhetorician besides being an eclectic. Like other Platonists he opposed God to matter .and made demons play an intermediary role between God and man

A long hierarchy of demons and angels was instituted by him which served as ministers to God and guardian…angels to man. He identified God with pure reason and considered matter to be a source of imperfection of the universe. Sins were due to the misuse of free…will by man and were not the result of any evil agency acting from without. Maximus did not believe in any evil world…soul, to whom human lapses could .be attributed

Maximus thought, very much like Rumi and other Muslim mystics that the soul is temporarily imprisoned in the human body and is ever yearning for release and .reunion with the Divine Source

Still another eclectic thinker from Syria by the name of Numenius of Apamea, who lived in the second half of the second century, is by many regarded as the real founder of Neo…Platonism. Hitti says

Plotinus the Greek philosopher of Egypt, credited with that distinction, was popularly" accused of basing his teachings on those of this Apamean and of

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(strutting around m his feathers."(١

In his writings, Numerous combined Pythagorean and Platonic opinions in such a manner that while granting Pythagoras the highest authority and even accusing Plato of borrowing from him, he yet gave a predominant place to Platonic ideas. He traced the philosophy of the Greeks back to the Orientals and called Plato an "Attic…speaking ".Moses

Numenius, however, was not simply a camp follower of Plato. He differed from him too, since he distinguished the world…builder as a second god from the highest Deity. The basis of this distinction is to be found in his metaphysics where God who is identified sometimes with the Reason of Aristotle, sometimes with the Monad of Pythagoras, and sometimes with both, stands against the creation which because of .its imperfections is far inferior to Him

The universe is created by a second god, the Demiurge, who is good by participation in the essence of the first. He acquires knowledge by gazing at the supersensible archetypes and brings the world into being. The universe which is created by the second god is regarded as the third god by Numenius. Thus considered, God becomes a cosmic triunity comprising three divinities: Father, Creator, and Creature, which .Numenius termed father, son, and grandson

The psychology of Numenius is as dualistic as his metaphysics. Man, being both spiritual and corporeal, participates in both the world…souls. Numenius was wise enough not to condemn body outright. It had to be condemned only when it stood in the way of reason

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P. K. Hitti, History of Syria, Macmillan, London, ۱۳۵۱, p. ۳۲۴ -۱

.and served as a cat's…paw in the hands of the evil world…soul

But in spite of his better thinking Numenius could not completely shake off the influence of the prevailing mode of thinking. He held that the encasement of the rational part of the soul in the human body did indicate a fall for the soul and that the :liberation of the soul could be effected through a long series of reincarnations

Hence the present life should be one of self…denial and renunciation, that is to say, a life of reason devoid of passions. In his stress upon transmigration as a means of liberation, Numenius betrays, like his teacher, Pythagoras, the influence of Hindu .thought

A passing reference may be made to P. Nigidius Figulus for his interest in the Pythagorean philosophy and also to Apollonius of Tyana who distinguished the one God from other gods. The First being ineffable and absolutely pure could not come in .contact with earthly things on account of their material constitution

Apollonius did not like offerings to be made to the one God these he reserved for the lesser gods. We may also briefly mention Moderatus of Gades who incorporated Platonism and non…theological doctrines into Pythagoreanism. Number one he .regarded as the symbol of unity and two as that of difference and inequality

The Jewish_Alexandrian Philosophy

Among the precursors of Neo…Platonism are to be counted Neo…Pythagoreanism and Jewish…Alexandrian philosophy in addition to a host of other tendencies which cannot be discussed here for want of space. Even out of

p: ۲۲۷

the Jewish thinkers we shall pick out Philo, leaving other luminaries altogether, again .for want of space

Philo, a Jew, was born at Alexandria a few years before Christ. His philosophy is an attempt to find an adjustment between the traditions of Israel and those of the Greeks. Philo felt that the aesthetic elements in Greek culture were repugnant to some of the elements involved in Jewish religion. To smooth out differences and to show the concordance between the two systems of thought and practice, Philo adopted the allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures already in use among .the Alexandrian Jews

On this interpretation, circumcision, for example, would signify and hence serve as a symbol for the cutting off of passions and ungodly opinions. Philo often criticized the literalists for their word…picking habits. But Philo was not a thoroughgoing symbolist. He knew that if once you defend an external practice on the ground that it is useful as .a symbol, it is very hard to assert that it is obligatory for all times to come

Philo, therefore, recognized that the literal sense is often accompanied by a more profound sense and that both the senses have to be accepted since both go together. “Although circumcision properly symbolizes the removal of all passions and sensibility and impious thoughts, yet we may not, therefore, set aside the practice enjoined, for in that case, we should be obliged to give up the public worship of God in the temple and a thousand other solemnities,”

says he in De Migratione Abrahami.(۱)

Philo was primarily a religious preacher rather than a philosopher. He had no desire to propound a theory of the universe which could stand the scrutiny of logical reason. He was essentially concerned with the life of soul and its attaining the beatific vision. Keeping this objective in view he demarcated the mystical experience from all other psychical experiences on the ground that while the former lifts you out of the ordinary plane of life and brings you in direct contact with some tremendous reality, the latter keeps you earthbound and sense…bound.

In this Philo was following in the footsteps of Plato who exhibits a religio…mystic vein in the Symposium and the Phaedrus, with the difference that Philo being a Jew first and last could not identify God with the impersonal divine reason of Plato. However, in suggesting methods for “soul…cultivation,” he again turned his attention to the Greeks, borrowed their psychology, and on its basis framed rules for the systematic training of the soul to receive the vision of God.

The theology of Philo is a blending of Platonism and Judaism. The Jewish doctrine shows God as intimately concerned with the world; the Platonic, though insisting upon the divine governance and divine formation of the world, does not hold that the relation which God has to the world…is necessary or automatic. The Middle Platonism recognized a hierarchy of divine beings, insisted upon the transcendence of God, and regarded the visible world as being governed

.Philo, De Migratione Abrahami, ed. T. Mangey, Vol. I, p. ۴۵۰ -۱

and made by lower intermediary divine powers. Philo had to reconcile these two .conceptions

Philo believed in one God, eternal, unchanging, passionless, far removed above the world of phenomena as the First Cause of all that exists. Causation, however, implies change and so God could not be regarded as directly creating the universe. Intermediary powers are, therefore, needed to explain the governance and formation of the world and what it contains. These powers Philo described very confusedly. Sometimes he talked of powers, sometimes of two powers, sometimes of .one

The problem before Philo was that of the development of multiplicity from absolute unity. The solution was sought in the inability of the contemplating mind to reproduce the absolute unity in itself. Philo gives an account of the "multiple" apparition of God to human intellect in the De Migratione Abrahuami.When the soul is illumined by God, it sees Him triple, one with a double shadow; but at the highest point, the shadow .vanishes and God is seen as One

In the Quaestiones in Genesim, Philo says that the mind "sees God triple" due to the weakness of its vision. "Just as the bodily eye sees a double appearance from one light, so the eye of the soul, since it cannot apprehend the one as one, makes a triple perception, according to the appearance of the chief serving powers which stand (beside the One."(۱

The highest of all the divine forces is the Logos (Word). Sometimes Philo, in common with Aristobulus and other earlier

Idem, Questions in Genesim,quoted by A. H. Armstrong, The Architecture of the -۱ Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus, Cambridge University Press. .Cambridge, ۱۹۴۰, pp. ۷۰-۷۱

commentators gave to it the name of Sophia, but the more commonly used word by .him is the Logos

In some of his writings he gives to Sophia the highest of the parts into which the Logos is divided. Logos has a dual nature. In man it is reason and also the spoken word. In the All it divides itself into the incorporeal and archetypal ideas of which the intelligible world consists, and the copies of these incorporeal ideas constitute the .world of perception

In other, passages Philo has called Sophia the mother of the Logos-ordinarily he calls it divine Logos without qualification or distinction…the mediator between God and man. It is so to say the instrument by which God makes the world and the .intermediary by which the human intelligence after being purified ascends to heaven

Philo is not clear on the independent existence of the Logos: On all accounts it seems that in Philo's mind the powers had little or no existence apart from their function. "His conception of them is affected by contemporary Greek ideas, but perhaps they really belong to that mysterious class of instrumental and subordinate quasi…beings which accompany the Divinity in Semitic and Persian thought, the Angel, the Wisdom, the Breath of God in the Jewish Scriptures, the Uncreated Law of the Rabbis and the quasi…personified Divine Virtues or the attributes of Persian (Zoroastrian) theology, (the Amesha Spentas."(١)

Anyhow Philo was not clear on this subject. As Ueberweg says in his History of Philosophy, Philo

p: ٢٣١

A. H. Armstrong, An Introduction, to Ancient Philosophy, Methuen, London, ١٩۴٧, p. -١ .١۶٢

wavered between, the attributive and the substantive conception of the Logos. He both hypostatized the Logos into a person and reduced it to a mere attribute or function of the first person.(١) What is, however, important for subsequent thinking is

not the nature of the Logos as such but the identification of the Logos with the Platonic world of forms and the use of this conception in explaining the creation of this .world

This led to a very great development in the thought of the medieval theologians. Philosophically speaking, the Philonian Logos is nothing but the principle of unity in diversity, of the separating and uniting of contraries in the material world. But .perhaps Philo would not like to be judged philosophically

The idea of Logos was not a metaphysical necessity for him; it was psychologically .needed for coming in contact with God

Philo's doctrines of “pneuma” and mystical union are equally important. The former is a free creative in‐breathing by God, becoming the image of God in man and ”.constituting thereby the highest part of man's soul, superior to the “psyche

Other schools outside Jewish circles were also emphasizing one God, eternal and invariable, as the Source and the First Cause of the universe. The Gnostic sects which were of philosophic origin accepted God as the First Cause, above the imperfections and variations of the mundane world and, therefore, requiring an intermediary or an .emanation to explain the production of an imperfect and variable world

Neo_Platonism

Plotinus

The ancestry of Neo‐Platonism can be traced

Ueberweg, A History of Philosophy, Vol. I, tr. Morris and Porter, Hodder Stoughton, ‐۱ .London, ۱۸۷۲, p. ۲۳۱

to Neo‐Pythagoreanism, Jewish Gnosticism, and other tendencies including Christianity, which so to say had become the Weltanschauung of most of those who had any living religion in the world of Greek culture: cruder and more superstitious

forms of it in the lower strata of society, more refined and Hellenized forms among .the educated

The founder of Neo…Platonism was Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus. Saccas means the sack…bearer and as a surname indicates the occupation by which Ammonius earned his living. Nothing definite can be asserted with regard to his philosophic convictions. Some have asserted that he proclaimed the identity of .Aristotelian and Platonic doctrines and also the immortality of the soul

But there is no historical evidence to decide one way or the other. Nor is there any justification for holding that Ammonius was the first to formulate the doctrine that the One is exterior to the world of ideas…a doctrine of fundamental importance in the .system of Plotinus

Plotinus was an Egyptian of Greek speech and culture, born probably in ۲۰۵ A. D. About his race and parentage nothing is certain, for he was, as Porphyry says,"like a man ".ashamed of being in the body

At the age of twenty…eight he went to Alexandria to receive philosophical training. He was surely disappointed till at last he came to Ammonius whose teachings satisfied him completely. With Ammonius he remained for eleven long years and left him only to accompany the Emperor Gordian in the hope of studying Persian and Indian .philosophy

The

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mission proved unsuccessful and Plotinus had to flee for his life to Antioch. At the age of forty, he went to Rome where he succeeded in winning the king and queen over to his doctrines. With the approval of the king he wanted to found a Philosopher's City, .where the inhabitants should live according to the teachings of Plato

The timely intervention of the nobles dissuaded the king from accepting such a silly proposal. In Rome he established his own school and taught there for the rest of his

life. A painful death, probably cancer of the throat, marked in ۲۷۰ A. D. the end of his .illustrious career

It is certain that Plotinus was conversant with the principal doctrines of all the philosophical schools of the Greeks, particularly Aristotelian and Platonic. He had read very assiduously the works of Numenius and came under his influence. This probably accounts for the complexities and tensions that one finds in his writings. It was not an easy task to synthesize the extremely complicated traditions that Plotinus had .inherited

There is a double purpose in his philosophy, the cosmic and the religious. He purports to give a complete account of reality which should also serve as a guide to spiritual life. These two strains go together and can be kept apart for theoretical purposes only. However, there is no denying the fact that the double task put a great strain on Plotinus' philosophical endeavour and led him to say much that sounds bizarre to the

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.modern ear

Reality, for Plotinus, is an ordered hierarchical whole comprising two movements, one of descent and the other of ascent. The first is an automatic creativity by which the higher generates the lower, while the second is a movement of return by which the .soul attains reabsorption in the Divine Source

The first is a movement from unity to multiplicity, the second is a reverse movement, that is to say, from multiplicity to unity. Plotinus sometimes emphasizes the one and sometimes the other and says things which are hard to reconcile. It is evident from his writings that he imposed upon himself a task which by its very nature was impossible .to accomplish

At the head of his system stands a transcendent First Principle, the One which is ineffable and incomprehensible to the discursive as well as the intuitive reason. Below the One lie the two hypostases which are the universal correlatives of the whole

.range of human life, physical and intellectual

These are Nous, Aristotle's active intellect, and the world…soul whose function is to contemplate as well as to direct the material world. The hypostases are united with each other and with the One, first, by emanation which is the radiation of the lower .from the higher and, second, by return in contemplation by the lower upon the higher

Plotinus conception of the One is very complicated and has been variously interpreted. The One may be regarded as the Neo…Pythagorean Absolute Unity from which all plurality proceeds. The One cannot be

said to have a being, for this way of thinking introduces a duality between subject and object and there can be no duality in Pure Unity. In the absolute state, in its first and highest hypostasis, the One is neither existence nor thought, neither moved, nor movable; it is simple unity or, as Hegel would say, the Absolute Nothing, the .Immanent Negative

There is a tendency in Plotinus derived from the Platonists and Middle Stoics to deny all predications to the One for fear of compromising Its unity. This tendency is, however, corrected by another much more positive approach. If the One is called God, then God is God not because He is nothing but because He embraces everything. .He is, however, better than the reality of which He is the source

The ideas no doubt form the content of His mind but they are nevertheless imperfect images as compared to the one Good, and receive radiance, "a grace playing upon their beauty" from the Primal Source. The positive aspect of the One is stressed so .much at places that it seems to contradict Plotinus basic assumptions

The One, he says, is pure will, loves Itself and is the cause of Itself. This characteri… zation conflicts with his earlier stand and justifies the use of human language for the .basic reality

In Plotinus, the negative and positive aspects go together. The positive aspect is,

however, more pronounced The One may be transcendental, but if It is a reality, It should not simply

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.be a Great Denial about which nothing positive can be asserted

This point can receive further clarification from an examination of the religious life of Plotinus. There is no doubt that he had a genuine mystical experience. Porphyry bears testimony to it and the whole spirit and the tenor of the Enneads lends weight to it. But what is the nature of this experience and what is its goal? Some make Plotinus a pantheist and an anti…rationalist, for whom the goal is dissolution of the self into .nothingness

Some think that he was trying to realize his pre…existing identity with the One through his own efforts, while others think that his experience was genuinely mystical, akin to that of the great Christian and Muslim mystics. The first interpretation is absurd, the .second is partially true. It is, however, the third one which truly explains his viewpoint

.Plotinus was torn so to say by the conflicting traditions he had inherited

The One was both transcendental and the Unity…Absolute. Again, the One was both inaccessible and also the goal of our own self…realization. Plotinus contradictions and tensions are the product of these irreconcilable strains in his Weltanschauung. In both cases the positive aspect predominates. But it should not be ignored that the tension .is real and fundamental

How did the world originate from the One? Thinkers before Plotinus had assumed dualism; they had distinguished the world from its creator. But dualism was no answer to the problem. If the creator and the created differ in essence

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the question whence came the world remains as unsolved as ever Plotinus answered the question by saying that the world is distinct from God in act rather than in

essence. The world is God but God is not the world. To explain it Plotinus had the .theory of emanation

Plotinus found it very hard to explain emanation except through metaphors. Both Nous and soul are produced by a spontaneous and necessary efflux of life from the One. They leave their source undiminished. The relation between the One and the other hypostases is described as being like that of the sun and its light or "in similes .from the radiative effect of fire, snow or perfumes

Can any philosophical meaning be given to this conception? It is difficult to see what meaning can be attached to emanation or radiation when attached to spiritual beings. Again, why, if the process is eternal, can one emanation be inferior to another? These .are points which pass comprehension

Plotinus has another way to explain his theory of emanation. He represents the One as a root or seed, the potentiality from which all things evolve into actuality. This comparison is used to describe the relation of the lower hypostases to the higher. About the soul, he says, it has potentialities which can only be actualized in the material world. Plotinus writes, "If then it is necessary that not only the One should exist . . . in the same way it is also necessary that not only souls

should exist in the absence of those things which come into being through them; that is supposing that every nature has this inherent quality of making that which comes after it and of unrolling itself as if proceeding from a sort of partless seed as a .beginning to the perceptible end

The prior being remains always in its proper place and that which comes after is as it were generated from an ineffable power (or potency)."(۱) This will show that the comparison to a seed is applied to all the hypostases including the One Itself. But it will be evident to every student of Plotinus that the comparison sets up an impossible .contradiction to the rest of the Enneads

The One may be the beginning of everything, but it cannot be the spermatic beginning. The system of Plotinus is teleological rather than evolutionary: the main .thrust of the universal forces is upwards and not downwards

The second hypostasis, the first emanation of the One, the Nous, is a very complicated notion. It is an image of the former and turns towards It to grasp and comprehend It. Through turning, it becomes Nous (reason)…sensory perception when the object of comprehension is sensible, and rational apprehension when the object of comprehension is supersensible. The Noun includes in itself the world of ideas. .Consequently, the ideas are immanent in the Nous and do not exist as external to it

It is clear that Plotinus needed an emanation in order that the First Cause should remain

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R A. H. Armstrong; The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of -۱ .Plotinus, p. ۶۱

unchanged. It is the Nous which is the reality behind the world of phenomena; the .things perceived are only the shadows of the real ones

From the Nous proceeds the third hypostasis, viz., Psyche, the principle of life and motion, the world…soul, which is in the universe and is shared by every living creature. The whole world is alive, he held, and seems to participate in a life similar to our own. Further, life requires a cause which must be found in intelligence, for everywhere one finds intelligent activities. Plotinus maintains that the intelligent activity is nothing but .a soul

Porphyry

The most important of the disciples of Plotinus was Porphyry, born in ۲۳۲ A.D., probably at Batanaea in Syria. He was altogether a lesser man but all the same a very loyal disciple and a devout follower, who by his pleasing diction brought within the range of understanding of all men the doctrines of Plotinus, which in the language of

its author had seemed difficult and obscure. Porphyry was more practical and .religious than his master

He declared the end of philosophizing to be the salvation of the soul. The cause of evil is the desire for the low and the base, and the means of deliverance are self…purification, asceticism, and philosophic cognition of God. While in Sicily, he wrote a book in which he criticized the doctrines of Christianity, especially the divinity of .Christ

He is the first among the successors of Plotinus to defend Hellenic paganism against Christianity. His interest

in demons as intermediaries between God and man is very much pronounced and he .has a great deal to say about them

Iamblichus

Iamblichus was a native of Chalcis in Coelesyria and a pupil of Porphyry. Like his master he taught at Rome after the death of Plotinus but retired in later life to Syria .where he died in ۳۳۰ A. D

The philosophy of Iamblichus is marked by an inrush of Syrian theology with its grosser conceptions, its wild and nonsensical trick of playing with numbers, and its craving for the baser forms of the supernatural. Iamblichus put faith above history and revelation, renounced the later Greek philosophy, and asserted that God could do .everything

After Plotinus, the Neo…Platonists were up against the mighty surge of Christianity. To stem it, they worked to bring about a complete and thorough theology based on the Dialogues of Plato, Chaldaean oracles, and the ancient myths: Greek, Egyptian, or Near Eastern. They were also concerned with elaborating the system of Plotinus and .making it absolutely complete

Iamblichus assumes still another absolutely ineffable and indeterminate first One above the One of Plotinus. The latter has produced the intelligible world, out of which the intellectual world has emanated. The objects of thought belong to the intelligible world while thinking belongs to the intellectual world. Then there is further splitting up, sub…division, or classification which makes the whole system nonsensically abstract and hopelessly unreal. Plotinus had distinguished Being, Life, and Intelligence, but had never gone so far as to break the

.complex unity into three hypostases. This was done by Iamblichus and his followers

Hence complications arose not because their philosophical principles were fantastic…which indeed they were…but because they tried to accommodate every god, demon, and hero of the pagan mythology into their system. The motive behind this attempt was a genuine desire to explain the emergence of multiplicity from unity .which was accomplished by the interpolation of the intermediate terms

It was, however, forgotten that no such attempt was destined to succeed as there can be nothing intermediate between the Absolute and other things. Increase in the number of deities, demons, and spirits cannot, philosophically speaking, solve the old .riddle of the One and the many

In the hands of Iamblichus and his followers philosophy became a conglomeration of mythical beings, an amazing metaphysical museum with entities labelled and .classified, leaving no room for any free intellectual and spiritual quest

The philosophy of Iamblichus and his followers was the last Neo…Platonic attempt to provide an alternative scheme of thought and life to Christianity which was forging ahead among the masses and the intellectuals. After a brief success Neo…Platonism failed to capture the imagination of the common man, with the result that the centres .of its teaching in Syria, Alexandria, and Athens were closed by a royal edict in ۵۲۹ A. D

Early Christianity

A great part of the Christian belief was formed of notions current in the Hellenic world. When the early preachers of Christianity explained the position of Jesus in the totality ,of things

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they did so in terms which bore a close resemblance to conceptions already current in the pagan and the Jewish worlds. Christianity had to assimilate elements from its Hellenistic environment. Its theology was influenced by gnosticism, which has been .aptly termed as Hellenistic theology

It was common to all forms of Hellenistic theology that the material world accessible to senses is evil and consequently very much inferior to the transcendental world; further, that the soul which has divine origin could win its way back through .self…denial and purification

While talking of evil the gnostics primarily thought of the material world and evils connected with sensual passions and not the injustice of the actual state of things or the inequality in the distribution of economic goods or the pains of poverty, disease, .and oppression which are ordinarily associated with evil by the modern man

With regard to the person of Jesus, there is a difference of opinion in the Hellenistic theology. It is argued that in Jesus a pre…existing heavenly being was present upon earth, but as to the manner of his corporeal manifestation, there is a variety of speculations. All alike regard Jesus Christ as a compound; they differ, however, with regard to the nature and mode of the combination of the human and divine elements .in his person

All these beliefs and controversies were taken over to the Christian Church and formed a basis for their understanding of the Testament. The Christians had their own philosophers too who endeavoured to reconcile philosophy

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and Christian theology. The prominent among them at Alexandria were Clement and

.Origen

The former was a Platonist of the older type who shows in his Stromateis how the general body of the Christian doctrine is adapted to the theories of Platonic philosophy. The latter also undertook a defence of the Christian faith against the objections of a Platonist. He was first among the Christian theologians to set forth the .doctrines of the Christian faith in a systematic form

Both Clement and Origen founded the Christian school of philosophical theology. But the attempt did not find favour with the people. The same Justinian who closed the school of the Neo…Platonists in ۵۲۹ A. D. condemned Origenism in nine anathemas in .about ۵۴۰ A. D

Having been made to quit Alexandria, Origen returned to Palestine and founded a school at Caesarea, on the model of that in Alexandria. It did not succeed like the original one but nevertheless exercised a potent influence on the Syrian Church. A rival school was set up at Antioch by Malchion. Fifty years later another school was established at Nisibis, right in the heart of the Syriac…speaking community. It was here .that the text…books studied at Antioch were rendered into Syriac

The Church had no philosophy of its own. It had to adapt itself to the Alexandrian philosophy, particularly to Neo…Platonism and Aristotelian metaphysics and psychology. This led to senseless controversies as the Arian doctrine shows. Both the ,Alexandrian and the Syrian Churches agreed that Christ was an emanation

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.eternal like God, but differed in their interpretation of eternity

The school of Antioch thought that God being the cause, there was a time when God existed but not the Son. This was denied by the Alexandrians who maintained that eternity does not admit of before and after. If God is Father He is so from eternity and .the Son should for ever be issuing from the Father as the source

The Arian controversy died by the fifth century A. D. giving place to another which

concerned the person of the incarnate Christ. It was largely a question of psychology. In De Anima Aristotle had defined soul as the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life "and described its four faculties as the nutritive, the sensible, the locomotive, and the intellectual.

The first three are common to men and animals, being concerned with the intake of food and with knowledge through sense and desire. The fourth one which is the intellect, Nous, or the rational soul is peculiar to man. It is independent of the body and the presumption is that it has its source not in the body."

Man is therefore a compound of psyche and the rational soul, the first signifying the first three functions of the soul, the second, the fourth one which later philosophy regarded as the emanation of Logos or the Agent Intellect. Difficulty arose about the co…presence of these elements in the personality of Christ. What would be the relationship

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between the Logos and psyche, its own emanation, when they come together in the same person? The question was discussed by the gnostics too.

They regarded human nature, that is, the psyche of Jesus Christ, either as a mere illusion or so detached from the divine that we have really two persons. On the second view the man Jesus is regarded as having been originally distinct from the heavenly Christ. The latter descended into him at his baptism and the compound Jesus Christ came to be. Some people put the coalescence of the two at an early date.

Both these positions were taken by the Church. The Alexandrians thought that the psyche and Logos fused in the person of Christ, while the school of Antioch headed by Nestorius rejected the hypothesis outright. Nestorius conceived of Christ as uniting in himself two persons, the Logos and a man although the two persons were so united that they might in a sense be deemed one.

As the controversy became acute a council was held at Ephesus in ۴۳۱ A. D. where the

Alexandrians succeeded in getting Nestorius and his followers condemned as heretics. They were persecuted and forced to migrate from Egypt. Accordingly, they founded a school in Edessa, a Syriac…speaking district. The school became the resort of the Nestorians and centre of the vernacular speaking Syriac Church. This school .was also banned and the scholars had to take refuge in Persia

The Nestorians had to support their theories by the prevailing philosophy and so

every Nestorian missionary was to some extent a propagandist of Greek philosophy. They translated into Syriac the works of Aristotle and his commentators, and also the .works of the theologians

The Nestorians had no sympathy with the government which had persecuted them. Consequently they spurned its language and celebrated the sacrament only in Syriac. They promoted a distinctly native theology and philosophy by means of translated .material and Syriac commentaries

The advocates of the fusion theory, the Monophysites or Jacobites as they were called, the rivals of the Nestorians, fared no better at the hands of the government. They were also persecuted and expelled. Consequently, they too bycotted the Greek language and began using Coptic and Syriac. In philosophy they were inclined more .towards Neo…Platonism and mysticism than the Nestorians

Ibas who led the Nestorian migration to Persia translated Porphyry's Isagoge, a manual of logic, into Syriac, while Probus produced commentaries on this book as well as on Aristotle's Hermeneutica, De Sophisticis Elenchis, and Analytica Priora. Sergius, a Jacobite, wrote about the Isagoge, the “Table of Porphyry,” Aristotle's “Categories” .and De Mundo. He also wrote treatises on logic in seven volumes

Ahudemmeh composed treatises on the definition of logic, on free…will, on the soul, on man considered to be a microcosm, and on man as a composition of soul and body. .Paul the Persian produced a treatise on logic which he dedicated to a Persian king

The Jacobites produced works no less than the Nestorians. Their productions are enormous no doubt but, all the

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same, they lack originality. For the most part they are only the transmission of received texts with their translations, commentaries, and explanatory treatises. But it cannot be denied that they fulfilled a genuine need and became a means of spreading .Greek philosophy and culture far beyond its original home

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Chapter ۶: Pre Islamic Arabian Thought

Point

Pre Islamic Arabian Thought by

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In the present chapter, we are concerned only with the people of Arabia who lived in the age immediately preceding the rise of Islam. The ancient civilized inhabitants of southern Arabia, the Sabaeans and Himyarites, have been left out of account, not only because the relevant materials at our disposal are scanty and fragmentary, but also because they are far removed from the Islamic times, with which the present .volume is primarily and directly concerned

We cannot hope to understand properly the religious or philosophical ideas of a people without comprehending their economic and social background. A few words about the social structure of pre…Islamic Arabs should, therefore Form a suitable and .helpful prelude to a description of their religious outlook

The land of Arabia is mainly a sandy plain, which is partly steppe…land and partly desert. Except in the oases which are few and far between, the land is bare and monotonous, unfit for cultivation and unable to support settled communities. From times immemorial, its inhabitants have been of necessity nomadic, living on the .produce of their camels and sheep

The majority of the ancient Arabs were, therefore, pastoralists who were constantly on the move in search of grass and water for their herds and flocks. Restless and rootless, with no permanent habitations, they stood at a low level of culture and were innocent of those arts and sciences which are associated in our minds with civilized

.life

The art of reading and writing was confined only to a few individuals in certain commercial centres, while illiteracy was almost universal among the sons of the desert. Their mental horizon was narrow, and the struggle for existence in their inhospitable environment was so severe that their energies were exhausted in

satisfying the practical and material needs of daily life, and they had little time or .inclination for religious or philosophic speculation

Their religion was a vague polytheism and their philosophy was summed up in a .number of pithy sayings

Although the ancient Arabs had no written literature, they possessed a language which was distinguished for its extraordinary rich vocabulary. In the absence of painting and sculpture, they had cultivated their language as a fine art and were justly proud of its enormous power of expression. Accordingly, the poets and orators who could make an effective and aesthetic use of its wonderful resources were held in .especially high esteem among them

Judging by the evidence furnished by the pre…Islamic poets, polemical passages in the Qur'an and the later Islamic literature, idolatry based on polytheism prevailed throughout ancient Arabia. Almost every tribe had its own god, which were the centre of its religious life and the immediate object of its devotion. The ancient Arabs, however, at the same time believed in the existence of a Supreme God, whom they .called Allah

But this belief was rather vague and their faith in Him was correspondingly weak. They might invoke Allah in time of

danger, but as soon as the danger was over they forgot all about Him. They also recognized and worshipped a large number of other subordinate gods along with Him, .or at least thought that they would intercede for them with Him

Three deities in particular, viz., al…`Uzza, al…Manat, and al…Lat, were accorded special veneration as the daughters of Allah. It was this association of subordinate deities with Allah which is technically known as shirk (association of gods with Allah) and which was condemned by the Prophet as an unpardonable sin. Shirk was held in .special abhorrence, as it obscured belief in the oneness of God

The innumerable deities, which the pagan Arabs worshipped, form a long series and are the subject of a monograph, written by ibn al_Kalbi, who flourished in the second century of the Islamic era and is counted among the leading authorities on Arabian antiquity.(١) A few of them have been incidentally mentioned in the Qur'an also.

These Arabian deities, which were of diverse nature, fell into different Categories. Some of them were personifications of abstract ideas, such as jadd (luck), sa'd (fortunate, auspicious), rida' (good_will, favour), wadd (friendship, affection), and manaf (height, high place). Though originally abstract in character, they were conceived in a thoroughly concrete fashion. Some deities derived their names from the places where they were venerated. Dhu al-Khalasah and Dhu al_Shara may be cited as examples of this kind.

The heavenly bodies and other powers of nature, venerated as deities, occupied an important place in the

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١- Ibn al_Kalbi, Kitab al_Asnam, ed. Ahmad Zaki Pasha, Cairo, ١٩١٤.

Arabian pantheon. The sun (shams, regarded as feminine) was worshipped by several Arab tribes, and was honoured with a sanctuary and an idol. The name `Abd Shams, "Servant of the Sun," was found in many parts of the country. The sun was referred to by descriptive titles also, such as shariq, "the brilliant one".

The constellation of the Pleiades (al_Thurayya), which was believed to bestow rain, also appears as a deity in the name `Abd al_Thurayya. The planet Venus, which shines with remarkable brilliance in the clear skies of Arabia, was revered as a great goddess under the name of al_`Uzza, which may be translated as "the Most Mighty".

It had a sanctuary at Nakhlah near Mecca. The name `Abd al_`Uzza was very common among the pre_Islamic Arabs. The Arabian cult of the planet Venus has been mentioned by several classical and Syriac authors.

There were certain Arabian deities whose titles in themselves indicate that they occupied a position of supreme importance in the eyes of their votaries. Such deities were: al…Malik, "the King" (compare the personal name, `Abd al…Malik); and Ba'۱ or .Ba'al, "the Lord" which was very common among the northern Semites

The deities of heathen Arabia were represented by idols, sacred stones, and other objects of worship. Sacred stones served at the same time as altars; the blood of the victims was poured over them or smeared over them. At the period with which we are .dealing, the Arabs sacrificed camels, sheep, goats, and, less often, kine

The flesh

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of the sacrifice was usually eaten by the worshippers, the god contenting himself with the blood alone. Originally, every sacrifice was regarded as food to be consumed by the god concerned or at least as a means of pacifying him. The sacrifice was, thus, believed to bring the worshipper into close connection with the deity. Hence the Arabic terms, qurba and qurban (derived from the root, QRB, to be near), which are .used for a sacrifice

The Arabs, like the Hebrews, were in the habit of sacrificing the firstlings of their flocks and herds (fara'). Soon after the birth of an infant, his head a shaven and a sheep was sacrificed on his behalf. This practice has survived among the Arabs and other Muslim peoples to the present day under the name of `aqiqah. Perhaps, this .was originally a ransom, offered as a substitute for the child himself

The gods of heathen Arabia were represented not only by rude blocks of stone (nusub, pl. ansab), but also by statues, made with more or less skill. The usual word for a divine statue, whether of stone or wood, was sanam. The other word used for this .purpose was wathan, which seems primarily to mean nothing more than a stone

Examples of tree…worship are also found among the ancient Arabs. The tree known as dhat al…anwat "that on which things are hung," received divine honours; weapons

and other objects were suspended from it. At Nakhlah, the goddess `Uzza is said to have been worshipped in

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.the form of three trees

The gods of the heathen Arabs were mostly represented by idols, which were placed in temples. These temples served as places of worship, where offerings and sacrifices were made by their votaries. The temples were by no means imposing buildings like .those of the Egyptians or the Greeks

They were simple structures, sometimes mere walls or enclosures marked by stones. Not only the temples were venerated as holy places, but sometimes the surrounding areas were also treated as sacred and inviolable (hima), and were supposed to be .under the special protection of their respective gods

In connection with several temples, we read of priests who served as their custodians (sadin, pl. sadana). They received the worshippers and gave them admission to the shrine. The office was generally hereditary, since we read of priestly families which .were attached to particular temples

Another word used for a priest was kahin, a term which was employed for a soothsayer as well. The priests were believed to be under the influence of the gods and to possess the power of foretelling future events and of performing other super-.human feats

In this way, their pronouncements resembled the ancient Greek oracles and were likewise vague and equivocal. In course of time, the priest who was in the beginning simply the custodian of the temple developed the character of a soothsayer as well, .and thus the term kahin came to acquire the sense of a soothsayer and seer

.There were female soothsayers as well

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Arabic literature has preserved many stories about kahin and many utterances are attributed to them. These utterances were usually made in rhymed prose, and are interesting not only in respect of their content but also with regard to their style. Their pronouncements consisted of a few concise sentences, which ended in words having the same rhyme. This mode of expression was known as saj`.

The same style is found in the earliest revelations received by the Prophet which now constitute the last chapters of the Qur'an. It is, therefore, not surprising that the contemporaries of the Prophet called him a kahin, a position which he firmly repudiated.

While in the beginning, the Qur'an adopted the style peculiar to saj`, it raised the conception to a level far beyond the imagination of the soothsayers. There is another point of similarity which should be noted here.

The utterances of the kahins were prefaced by oaths, swearing by the earth and sky, the sun, moon, and stars, light and darkness, and plants and animals of all kinds. These oaths offer an interesting point of comparison with the oaths used in the Qur'an.

The temples of the heathen Arabs were for them not only places of worship but also places of pilgrimage. They assembled there periodically at certain times of the year, when these assemblies assumed the character of fairs and festivals.

An important sanctuary of this kind was located at Mecca, a town in western Arabia, which was situated at a distance of about fifty

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miles inland from the Red Sea. The town lay on the trade…route which led along the sea from the Yemen to Syria, and its situation may have been partly determined by the presence of a well, called Zamzam, which has a considerable and fairly constant supply of water. The sanctuary consisted of a simple stone structure of cube…like appearance, which was called the Ka'bah by the Arabs.

One of the walls contained a black stone (al…hajar al…aswad). Inside the Ka'bah was the statue of the god, Hubal. At its feet, there was a small pit in which offerings to the temple were deposited. Besides Hubal, al…Lat, al…`Uzza, and al…Manat were also worshipped at Mecca and are mentioned in the Qur'an. At the rise of Islam, the .temple is said to have contained as many as three hundred and sixty idols

It seems that in course of time the various Arab tribes had brought in their gods and placed them in the Ka'bah, which had consequently acquired the character of the .national pantheon for the whole of Arabia

From times immemorial, the Ka'bah at Mecca had been the centre of a great pilgrimage, in which the most diverse tribes from all over Arabia took part. But this .was possible only when peace reigned in the land

For this purpose, the month of Dhu al…Hijjah in which the rites and ceremonies con…nected with the pilgrimage were performed and the preceding and succeeding months of Dhu al…Qa'dah and Muharram altogether three consecutive months were

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.regarded as sacred months, during which tribal warfare was prohibited

This period was sufficiently long to enable the tribes from the remotest corners of Arabia to visit the Ka'bah and return to their homes in peace. The territory around Mecca was also treated as sacred (haram); and the pilgrims laid aside their weapons .when they reached this holy territory. The pilgrimage was called hajj

During the pilgrimage, the pilgrims had to perform a number of rites and ceremonies, which lasted for several days and which can be described here only with the utmost .brevity

As soon as the pilgrims entered the sacred territory, the haram, they had to practise self…denial by observing a number of prohibitions: they had to abstain from hunting, .fighting, sexual intercourse, and certain other things

They circumambulated the Ka'bah, and also kissed the Black Stone which was fixed in one of its walls. An essential rite of the hajj was a visit to the hill of ` Arafat on the ninth of Dhu al…Hijjah, when the pilgrims assembled in the adjoining plain and stayed there till sunset for the prescribed wuquf (the stays or halts). The hill of 'Arafat is said to have borne another name, Ilal, which may have been the name of the shrine or rather of the deity worshipped there in ancient times.(۱)

The pilgrims then went to Muzdalifah, which was consecrated to Quzah, the thunder god. Here they spent the night, when a fire was kindled on the sacred hill. At sunrise the pilgrims left

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۱- Wellhausen, Reste Arabischen Heidentums, ۲nd ed., Berlin, ۱۸۹۷, p. ۸۳.

for Mina, an open plain, where they sacrificed the animals, camels, goats, and sheep, which they had brought with them for the purpose.

The animals meant for sacrifice were distinguished by special coverings or other marks. During their stay at Mina, the pilgrims also used to throw stones at three prescribed sites as a part of the pilgrimage ceremonial. After staying at Mina for three days, the pilgrims left for their homes. Women took part in the pilgrimage along with men.

The hajj as described above was retained by the Prophet as a major religious institution of Islam, with certain modifications of its ceremonials which were intended to break the link with their pagan associations. While the position of the Ka'bah was emphasized as the house built by the Patriarch Abraham for the service of Allah, the halts (wuquf)at 'Arafat (along with the one at Muzdalifah) was retained as an essential feature of the Islamic hajj.

In addition to the innumerable gods, the heathen Arabs also believed in the existence of demons, shadowy beings, which they called the jinn (variant: jann). The word probably means covered or hidden. Hence the jinn meant beings invisible to the eye.

They were regarded as crafty and mischievous, almost malevolent, and were .consequently held in fear

They were supposed to haunt places dreaded either for their loneliness or for their unhealthy climate. The fear of the jinn, therefore, gave rise to various stories, in which .they are said to have killed or carried off human beings

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Like many other primitive peoples, the heathen Arabs believed in demoniacal .possession

The jinn were supposed to enter human beings and even animals, rendering them "possessed" or mad. According to the testimony of the Qur'an, the Meccans believed that there was a kinship between Allah and the jinn, and that they were His partners. .Accordingly they made offerings to them and sought aid from them

In spite of the bewildering multiplicity of the subordinate gods whom the pre…Islamic Arabs venerated, they believed in the existence of a Supreme God whom they called Allah. The word Allah is found in the inscriptions of northern Arabia and also enters .into the composition of the numerous personal names among them

There are a large number of passages in the poetry of the heathen Arabs in which Allah is mentioned as a great deity. Allah also occurs in many idiomatic phrases which .ere in constant use among them

The Qur'an itself testifies that the heathens themselves regarded Allah as the Supreme Being. Their sin, however, consisted in the fact that they worshipped other gods besides Him. It was against this shirk that the Prophet waged an unrelenting war. In any case, it is important to note that the Qur'anic monotheism did not find it necessary to introduce an altogether new name for the Supreme Being and, .therefore, adopted Allah, the name already in use

Even before the advent of Islam, old polytheism was losing its force in Arabia, since the Arabs notion of their gods had

always been vague. With the decline of old paganism, a number of men had appeared in various parts of the country who had become convinced of the folly of idolatry, and .were seeking another more satisfying faith

They were fairly numerous and were called Hanifs. The Qur'an uses this term in the sense of a monotheist, and describes Abraham the Patriarch as the first Hanif. But none of these Hanifs had the vision and force of conviction and the proselytizing zeal .which distinguished the mission of Muhammad

The ancient Arabs believed that the human soul was an ethereal or air…like substance quite distinct from the human body. As such, they considered it identical with breath. This identification was so complete in their view that the word for breath, nafs, came .to mean human personality itself

They were confirmed in this belief by their experience that death resulted when a human being ceased to breathe. At the time of death, breath along with life itself escaped through its natural passage, the mouth or the nostrils. When a person passed away on his death…bed, his soul was said to escape through his nostrils (mata hatfa anfihi), and in the case of a violent death, e. g., on a battle…field, through the .gaping wound

When a person was murdered, he was supposed to long for vengeance and to thirst for the blood of the murderer. If the vengeance was not taken, the soul of the murdered man was believed to appear above his grave in

the shape of an owl continually crying out, "Give me to drink" (isquni), until the murder .was avenged

The restless soul in the form of a screeching owl was supposed to escape from the skull, the skull being the most characteristic part of the dead body. Certain rites of burial, prevalent among the pre…Islamic Arabs, show that they believed in some sort

.of future existence of the soul

In order to show honour to a dead chief, for instance, a camel which had been pre… viously hamstrung was tethered near the grave and was left to starve. This usage can be explained only on the hypothesis that the animal was to be at the service of the dead man. The custom of slaughtering animals at the graves of elders has been kept .up in Arabia to the present day

Ancient poets often express the wish that the graves of those whom they love may be refreshed with abundant rain. Similarly, their sometimes address greetings to the dead. It may be that expressions of this kind are not merely rhetorical figures of speech; they probably indicate their belief in the survival of those who have departed .from this world

Although there are indications that the ancient Arabs hard some notion, however hazy, of the survival of the human soul after death, they had no clear notion of life after death. As stated in the Qur'an, they could not understand how a human being, after his bones had been reduced to dust, could be

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called to life once again. Since life after death was something beyond their comprehension, the question of retribution for human deeds did not arise in their .minds

The Qur'an uses the word ruh (spirit) as well as nafs for the human soul. Accordingly, the Muslim theologians do not make any distinction between the two terms in designating the soul. The ancient Arabs were generally fatalists. They believed that events in the lives of human beings were preordained by fate, and, therefore, inevitable. However hard they might try, they could not escape the destiny that was in .store for them

The course of events was believed to be determined by dahr or time, so that suruf al…dahr (the changes wrought by time) was a most frequent expression used by the

Arabs and their poets for the vicissitudes of human life. The same feeling is expressed in several of their proverbs and maxims. This view was probably born of their practical .experience of life

In no part of the world is human life quite secure against the sudden changes of fortune, but in the peculiar milieu of Arabia man seems to be a helpless victim to the caprice of nature to an unusual degree. The sudden attack of a hostile neighbouring tribe or a murrain in his herds and flocks may reduce a rich man to dire poverty almost overnight; or in the case of a prolonged drought, he may be brought face to face with .fearful famine and death

The peculiar circumstances of

desert life, thus, seem to have encouraged the growth of fatalistic tendencies among the Arabs. Bearing in mind the existence of these tendencies among the ancient Arabs, it is not surprising to find that similar views prevailed in the first centuries of Islam and that the dogma of predestination was almost universally accepted among .the Muslim masses. Predetermination was, however, divorced from dahr

The feeling of utter helplessness in the face of inexorable fate has probably given rise to another idea among the Arabs; the idea of resignation as a commendable virtue. Possibly, it has a survival value for those who adopt a submissive attitude towards the .hardships and adversities of human life

Instead of fretting and fuming and hurling oneself in violent revolt against the decree of fate and thus running the risk of complete disintegration, there seem comparative safety and the possibility of ultimate survival in accepting calmly and patiently the dictates of fate. The inculcation of resignation as a virtue, thus, seems to be a natural .corollary to the dogma of predestination

Although religion had little influence on the lives of pre…Islamic Arabs, we must not suppose them to be an all together lawless people. The pagan society of ancient

.Arabia was built on certain moral ideas, which may be briefly described here

They had no written code, religious or legal, except the compelling force of traditional custom which was enforced by public opinion; but their moral and social ideals have been faithfully preserved in their poetry, which is

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.the only form of literature which has come down to us from those old days

The virtues most highly prized by the ancient Arabs were bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, loyalty to one's fellow…tribesmen, generosity to the needy and the poor, hospitality to the guest and the wayfarer, and persistence in revenge. Courage in battle and fortitude in warfare were particularly required in a land where might was .generally right and tribes were constantly engaged in attacking one another

It is, therefore, not a mere chance that in the famous anthology of Arabian verse, called the Hamasah, poems relating to inter…tribal warfare occupy more than half of the book. These poems applaud the virtues most highly prized by the Arabs…bravery .in battle, patience in hardship, defiance of the strong, and persistence in revenge

The tribal organization of the Arabs was then, as now, based on the principle of kinship or common blood, which served as the bond of union and social solidarity. To defend the family and the tribe, individually and collectively, was, therefore, regarded as a sacred duty; and honour required that a man should stand by his people through .thick and thin

If kinsmen sought help, it was to be given promptly, without considering the merits of the case. Chivalrous devotion and disinterested self-sacrifice on behalf of their .kinsmen and friends were, therefore, held up as a high ideal of life

Generosity and hospitality were other virtues which were greatly extolled by the Arab poets. They were personified in Hatim of

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the tribe of Tayy, of whom many anecdotes are told to this day. Generosity was specialty called into play in the frequent famines, with which Arabia. is often afflicted .through lack of rain

The Arabian sense of honour also called blood for blood. Vengeance for the slain was an obligation which lay heavy on the conscience of the pagan Arabs. It was taken .upon the murderer or upon one of his fellow…tribesmen

Usually this ended the matter, but sometimes it led to a regular blood…feud, which lasted for a long period and in which many persons lost their lives. The fear of retribution had a salutary effect in restraining the lawless instincts of the Bedouin; but the vendetta in some cases was carried to extreme limits and involved a great loss of .human life

In the century before Muhammad, Arabia was not wholly abandoned to paganism. Both Judaism and Christianity claimed a considerable following among its inhabitants. Almost every calamity that befell the land of Palestine sent a fresh wave of Jewish .refugees into Arabia, sometimes as far as the Yemen

They had probably taken refuge there after the conquest of Palestine by Titus in ۷۰ A. D. Jewish colonists flourished in Medina and several other towns of northern Hijaz. In the time of the Prophet, three large Jewish tribes, viz., Nadir, Quraizah, and Qainuqa, dwelt in the outskirts of Medina, and the fact that the Prophet made an offensive and defensive alliance with them for the safety of the town

.shows that they were an important factor in the political life of those times

These colonies had their own teachers and centres of religious study. Judging by the few extant specimens of their poetry, these refugees, through contact with a people nearly akin to themselves, had become fully Arabicized both in language and sentiment. They, however, remained Jews in the most vital particular, religion, and it is probable that they exerted a strong influence over the Arabs in favour of

.monotheism

Another religious factor which was strongly opposed to Arabian paganism was the Christian faith. How early and from what direction Christianity first entered Arabia is a question which it is difficult to answer with certainty; but there is no doubt that Christianity was widely diffused in the southern and nothern parts of Arabia at the .time of the Prophet

Christianity is said to have been introduced in the valley of Najran in northern Yemen from Syria, and it remained entrenched in spite of the terrible persecution it suffered .at the hands of the Himyarite king, Dhu Nawas, who had adopted the Jewish faith

The Prophet received at Medina a deputation of the Christians of Najran and held discussions with them on religious questions. Christianity in the south…west of Arabia received a fresh stimulus by the invasion of the Christian Abyssinians, who put an end to the rule of Dhu Nawas. There were Christians in Mecca itself; Waraqah ibn Naufal, a cousin of Khadijah, the first wife of the Prophet, was

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one of them. Christianity was also found among certain tribes of the Euphrates and .the Ghassan who lived on the borders of Syria

Their conversion was due to their contact with the Christian population of the Byzantine Empire. The Ghassanids, who were Monophysites, not only defended their Church against its rivals but also fought against the Muslims as the allies of the .Byzantine emperors

The Christians were also found at Hirah, a town in the north…east of Arabia, where Arab princes of the house of Lakhm ruled under the suzerainty of the Persian kings. These Christians, who were called `Ibad or the "Servants of the Lord," belonged to the Nestorian Church, and contributed to the diffusion of Christian ideas among the .Arabs of the Peninsula

By the sixth century, Judaism and Christianity had made considerable head way in

Arabia, and were extending their sphere of influence, leavening the pagan masses, .and thus gradually preparing the way for Islam

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About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the cyberspace.

Our Goals are:

-propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t)

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-replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers

-providing services for seminary and university researchers

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-paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works

Policies:

-acting according to the legal licenses

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-mentioning the sources

It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author.

Other activities of the institute:

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We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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